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**THREE TRAVELLERS IN  
NORTH AFRICA**

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THE MARABOUT OF ZAOUIA



ZAOUIA. THE SUBJECTS OF THE MARABOUT

# THREE TRAVELLERS IN NORTH AFRICA

BY THE HON. EMILY WARD, WITH  
PHOTOGRAPHS AND A CHAPTER ON  
SOUTHERN TUNISIA BY LORD LEIGH,  
AND A PREFACE BY THE HON. AGNES LEIGH

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PHILADELPHIA: J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY  
LONDON: JOHN LANE THE BODLEY HEAD LTD.

MCMXXII

KD 17301



*Printed in Great Britain by R. Clay & Sons, Ltd., Bungay, Suffolk.*

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## PREFACE

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DURING the winter of 1919-20 my brother Lord Leigh, my friend Miss Ward and myself spent nearly four months in the North of Africa. As we were all keen sightseers, we greatly enjoyed the novelty and freshness of the desert and of the more remote districts of Algeria and Tunisia ; and though after each excursion into the wilds we refreshed ourselves by a return to the comforts of a good hotel, we were always ready and eager to set off again to the haunts of the Arab and the Kabyle.

Our journeys led us for hundreds of miles among wonderful and varied scenery. We travelled through mountain passes, over wild and barren tracts of desert, into strange Eastern towns and strange market-places where we drank coffee with hospitable Caïds and felt ourselves back in the days of the Arabian Nights ; or, again, we were amongst relics of a remote

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past, as at Timgad or Dougga ; or we were gazing in amazement at the almost uncanny hot springs of Hammam Meskoutine ; or we were among the pleasant, cultivated pastures of the smiling Kabyle.

Miss Ward kept a journal and worked at it with great regularity in spite of calls on her time and strength involved by long motor-drives, strenuous sight-seeing and much sketching ; while my brother was constantly busy with his Kodak. It is thought that a little book, the result of their combined efforts, might be of use to future travellers in the regions we traversed and help them in making their own itinerary.

Miss Ward is responsible for the greater part of the letterpress, but Lord Leigh contributes, in addition to the photographs, accounts of shooting excursions, of which he made several ; and in Chapter XI he describes an expedition into parts of Tunisia which he took alone, except for the guide Jules and the chauffeur, and which he found to be of singular interest.

AGNES LEIGH.

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**THREE TRAVELLERS IN  
NORTH AFRICA**

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## CHAPTER I

### LAGHOUAT

*December 19-23, 1919.*

ON December 19, 1919, Lord Leigh, his sister, and myself went for a motor tour in Southern Algeria. Jules Durand was our guide—a Frenchman, active, resourceful, and alert, who knew Algeria from end to end. We did not leave Algiers before eleven o'clock, starting from Mustapha Supérieur, which overlooks the town and bay.

Our first stage was through a smiling country, known as the "Tell," a long strip, running between the seashore and the spurs of the mountains, in Roman times a land of olive-yards and vineyards, the granary of Italy, with wide tracts of cereals, famous in history. The Arabs, however, who have an instinct for destruction, allowed it all to go to waste, so that when the French conquered the country in 1830, this lengthy tract of land (which runs

for hundreds and hundreds of miles along the coast, sometimes thirty miles broad, and sometimes a hundred) was nothing but marsh and jungle—the home of jackals, panthers, and hyænas.

We had luncheon at Blida, thirty-two miles on our way, and were ushered into the hotel by an ancient Arab, called Mahomet, who had wreathed his turban with veronica and carnation, the whole erection being very attractive in combination with a white beard.

We were bound for Boghari, and, after Blida, passed through orange-groves famous throughout Algeria, where men were collecting the fruit in pyramids, in preparation for packing and exporting, thousands of these Tangerines finding their way both to Paris and to Covent Garden.

At length we came to the “Ruisseau des Singes,” and were told to look out for monkeys. A grey monkey was obliging enough to appear, which was fortunate, for they are getting comparatively rare, as Jules explained, pointing to the cause above our heads—an eagle! The eagle sailed away like an aeroplane.

Now the scenery was becoming very beau-

tiful, high wooded hills and deep gorges, each turn of the road bringing before our eyes a fresh picture, sometimes groups of shepherds with their flocks, looking like scenes in picture-bibles, sometimes herds of oxen, and picturesque Arab cowboys, or odd little shaky country carts, drawn by a mixture of horses and mules. Friday is market day in most of the villages, so the road was very lively.

Presently something went wrong with the motor (which was very sad on the first day of the tour), and all thoughts of arriving at Boghari had to be given up. While a temporary repair was being made, we walked up the zigzag mountain road, till the motor caught us up, and as it was not going satisfactorily, we stopped at *Medéa* for the night, 3000 feet up in the mountains.

We noticed quantities of Russians, who are working for the French, both in the town and in the fields. They were part of a division who refused to fight at Salonica, and were promptly sent to Algeria. Several detachments were in *Medéa*, and 15,000 of them altogether in North Africa.

*Medéa* stands high (on the site of an old

Roman town—Ad Medias), the surrounding country looks prosperous and highly cultivated, and there are remains of an ancient aqueduct. Otherwise the town is modern, and entirely French, the mosque having been turned into a Christian church ; but the view from our window was full of movement. When L. went to the post office next morning one Arab asked his nationality, and beamed with satisfaction when he heard he was English, remarking, “Les Anglais sont bons.”

At last we got under way, and if it had been a little warmer, the drive would have been quite delightful ; the car hummed up an ascent for some time, and for hours we drove through the mountains, and were filled with admiration at the powers of French engineering. Sometimes we ascended the hills in spirals, every corner opening out a fresh view ; sometimes the road was cut sheer out of the mountain side, forming a ledge, with a precipice beneath, each turn revealing wonderful vistas of an ever-changing panorama ; on and on, higher and higher, till we got into the snow, over the highest pass, and then we began to descend.

We went through a town called Berrouaghia,

which boasts of Roman remains, and on again through a region which until lately was a forest of pine trees—cut down within the last few years for war purposes—and presently we crossed the river Cheliff, and at length arrived at Boghari.

The Arab town is at a little distance from the French town, the main street running up a steep hill, paved, and with steps at intervals; we walked through it at about the sunset hour, when crowds of Arabs were returning home.

The dress of the Arabs is full of distinction in its simplicity and convenience. In Algiers and the bigger towns it has become more elaborate, but here, the *burnous* (the ample cloak) was white, of a fine woollen material, draping into flowing lines when thrown over the left shoulder. The poorer classes wear garments of a coarse striped cloth of camels' hair, strong enough to last a lifetime, and in shape more like a dressing-gown, with a hood suggesting that of a Capuchin friar. The turbans of these Arabs were imposing in height, the veil of woollen gauze, the *haick*, softening the severity of the felt shape beneath.

The following day we left Boghari and had

our first hint of desert scenery. A sandy plain with low scrub, where camels were grazing placidly, with baby camels near by. Then we passed through a curious region of salt, once the bed of a lake, perhaps ; to our right was a hill, three or four hundred feet high, the Rocher de Sel, formed entirely of salt, and as the salt frequently collapses, its profile was strangely irregular.

The air had all the sparkle and fizz of champagne in it, the sand was strewn with coloured stones, and we drove on through vast solitudes, fascinated by the colouring and the shape of the hills. Several were like pyramids, others were serrated in profile like steps of stairs, and as we came up to them and saw them, broadside on, it was even more strange, like a mammoth Roman encampment, fortified, which went on for miles and miles.

Nature behaves strangely in these desert places, and almost gave us the idea she was trying experiments, so irregular and varied and interesting were the unusual shapes of the rocks. In one place, piled up one upon another, were masses of mammoth blocks of stone, so even in shape that they looked like

giant architecture, with square-cut perpendicular corner-stones. Perhaps in prehistoric ages primeval man was thus given a hint how to use the resources of Nature.

In the afternoon sunshine, the natural pyramids, perfect in form, and the natural fortresses along the hill-tops, glowed almost copper-pink, and then a turn of the road brought us within sight of Laghouat, the City of Palms.

We found Laghouat *en fête*, for *Les belles Courses*, the annual event of the year, were taking place. The town is full of palms, growing apparently where they like, springing from the bare earth to a height of forty or fifty feet—"princes of the vegetable kingdom," as Linnaeus called them. Date-growing is one of the most profitable industries in Algeria, one bunch of dates weighing anything from twenty to twenty-five pounds, and an average crop from a single tree would be about five hundred pounds in weight. Laghouat is fortunate in possessing constant supplies of water from fresh springs, the name being derived from aqua.

Everywhere palms, and low, white, arcaded

streets, built by the French, and eager, pressing crowds in every kind of garb, for Arabs of all descriptions had come into the city for the races, the great event of the year. Groups of eight and ten sitting at little tables smoking keef, and drinking coffee, more groups on the ground, arguing and gesticulating ; Arabs in white *burnouses*, Moors in elaborately embroidered cloaks, Kabyles, Mozabites, Turks, Jews, negroes, eating and gossiping and smoking, while others with heads erect walked proudly up and down, with the regular desert stride of freedom, full of the dignity of the ages, and impressing the European at every turn.

Colour, movement and freshness, and over all the glow of the setting sun. The shops were doing a roaring trade. The Arabs show none of their goods in their shop windows ; you must be bold, and enter and look round if you want to buy, and the shopkeeper is always courteous, with the manner of a prince, grocery, stationery and drapery being often sold over the same counter.

Next morning, quite early, we heard that the Pashada of Laghouat had invited us to luncheon. The Pashada is an important Arab Sheikh, his

eldest son having represented him at Paris in the Victory Procession.

Passing through the streets and open spaces of the city, the various natives and visitors to the town were of enormous interest again, with their majestic way of walking. The Arabs are tall and lithe, and their dress to a certain extent accentuates their upward bearing and stately stride. Often one found oneself mentally comparing our friends in the Sahara with the characters in the Old Testament. Was not that Abraham sitting at his tent door? There was Isaac to the life, and Jacob with his twelve sons, and we recognised Balaam, and Ishmael, and many more besides.

At eleven o'clock, the son of the Pashada, a man with a fine countenance, and dressed in a *burnous* of royal red, came to call for us, and L. and he walked ahead, A. and I following. Poor people, in passing, kissed his arm and then his shoulder, and presently, as we walked along, he stopped before an imposing figure—the PASHADA, an old man, who, with Arab courtesy, had come out a little way to meet us.

The Pashada had a brilliant red and gold *burnous*, and this was lined with embroidered

silk, and swayed from side to side as he walked. He had a dark blue *caftan* beneath, trimmed with Austrian braid ; voluminous blue pantaloons hanging over bright red leather gaiters, which disappeared into well-shaped, flat-heeled shoes of the same colour, so plain that they looked as if they were moulded to his feet. His turban was high, the shape of a giant thimble, and covered tightly with his *haick*, the fine transparent veil (which is bound round the turban with yards upon yards of camels' hair wool) hanging behind in a kind of bag at the back of the neck, while the long ends turned into a blouse beneath the *caftan*, held in place by a broad band of silk.

He had a slow stateliness of manner, and very kind eyes, as he welcomed us, and introduced us to his two sons, who were escorting him, both dressed in gorgeous apparel, which also swayed from side to side.

He turned and brought us to his house. We went upstairs and were shown into a long, narrow reception-room, where we saw coffee set out on three tables. There he left us alone for a few minutes. Presently he returned and introduced us to his nephew, the Caïd of Djelfa,

who followed him into the room. Then other relations of his were brought in, and formally presented, and many of them spoke French very well.

Luncheon was then announced—an Arab feast. We were told by the Colonel in command at Algiers (one of our fellow-guests) that the highest test of politeness at such a feast is never to say "No, thank you!" Arab hospitality being proverbial. The menu was a lengthy one, but there is one dish which is the feature of every Arab feast, from Arabia to Morocco, and that is the *meschoui*, a sheep roasted whole and borne in with some ceremony on an enormous dish.

One of the Pashada's many relations was deputed to carve—this in itself was an honour—and for a short time he took the Pashada's place. He was a vivid figure, his complexion distinctly darker than that of any of the other Easterns at the feast, and his eyes were dark and shining, his uniform in splendid contrast—the tunic red, with voluminous blue pantaloons hanging over neat red leather boots with spurs.

A further point of etiquette requires the honoured guest to stand up, and with finger

and thumb pluck off flakes of meat from the well-roasted sheep, with the greatest possible precision and dignity. Then came *couscous*, without which no Arab feast is complete. You build a pyramid of semolina on your plate, and have to help yourself rather generously to do this successfully ; then you dig a hole in the middle, leaving a little round wall, and pour in gravy, or some good and piquant sauce, which saturates the semolina.

After the feast came coffee and cigarettes in the drawing-room, and an amusing sight out of the window of a camel being decorated carnival-wise for the fête. The profound dignity of a camel is a study. There was a look of passionate disdain in his large and heavily-lidded eye, and being dressed as for a carnival hurt him sore. He roared, and grunted, and snarled, and turned his head round and showed his teeth ; but he was a lovely dark camel, soft as velvet, and at the races the best turned-out camel with the most smartly decorated *bassour* (which is the palanquin in which ladies travel) was to receive a prize.

A net of wool, with a large mesh, covered him from his head to his knees, and at every

knot there was a tassel. Over this were bright saddle-cloths, and then, in the region of the hump, was the *bassour*, draped with the most vivid colours, and also copper and gold and silver tissue. It is an immense erection, and at its apex, and also at the four corners, are little palm trees, made out of black feathers.

In addition to the Arab, French, and British guests, there were two Americans at the Pashada's luncheon-party—two adventurous cinematograph operators, who photograph moving pictures in colour for the films. They had come from Djelfa, in a *diligence* crowded with Arabs, in order to immortalise "les belles courses." They had slept on the road, and they had slept at caravanserais ; they had had many adventures, and had undergone all sorts of hardships, and had overcome many difficulties with regard to their cameras and their kinemacolour apparatus. The Pashada received them with delightful courtesy, and assured them that every facility would be given them to make their moving pictures a success.

Arrived at the race-course, we had an impression of a circular crowd, white for the most part, with tents, fluttering flags, and desert

sand beyond. We walked across to the grand stand, which was a screen made of Esparto grass, and decorated with three large French flags.

Just now the French are doing all they can to keep the Arabs in good humour ; they built a large mosque for them at Laghouat, and now were giving generous prizes for the different events : 1st prize, 3000 francs ; 2nd prize, 2000 francs ; 3rd prize, 1000 francs.

After watching several of the races, we crossed the course, being attracted by the row of camels, in their full dress, in brightest combinations of colour—gold, pink and mauve, silver, green and blue, copper, scarlet and yellow, and many others. They appeared like colossal peacocks, for at a distance the *bassours* looked fan-shaped, and the camel was almost dwarfed.

The cinematograph men were in their element : "Why, we'll *make* Laghouat !" one of them said ecstatically. The Pashada was enjoying it too, and played up to all that was required of him, though what is most imposing about him is his immobility. However, he walked from camel to camel, and then turned round and faced the camera, and strode magnificently out of the

picture. Early in the afternoon he had figured in a great many pictures, on foot as well as on horseback.

We were still looking at the camera, standing against their background of eucalyptus, date-palms and cypress, when the Pashada asked A. and me whether we should like to mount the noble animal before us, and test the comfort of a *bassour*. I said, "Please," and, mounting from the bent knee of a graceful Arab, I dived through the awning on to the back of the camel, which at a word from his driver had knelt down in order to be mounted. "Asseyez-vous au milieu!" said the Pashada, which I did, amongst luxurious cushions, and then the camel rose solemnly to his feet, so gently that I hardly felt it. "I am taking a picture of you!" cried out the cinematographers; so I pulled back the curtains of the *bassour* and looked out, and heard the tick-tick-tick-tick of the kinemacolour machine as we passed by.

Somehow, as the camel stalked along in these extraordinary surroundings, the immense oddness of the situation made me simply laugh out loud. To be on a marvellously decorated camel, at a sort of tournament in the Desert of Sahara

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in Christmas week, so thrilled me that I was quite sorry when the camel was desired to kneel down and I had to dismount.

Next came a camel-race, and that was very funny. It had all the possibilities and humours of a donkey-race, for the camels are driven by a single rope on the left side. Several started, and there were three prizes, but at the finish only two turned up and received rewards, the third camel having thrown his rider, who after about five minutes had caught him and led him in in triumph, and was promptly awarded the 3rd prize of 1000 francs.

Then the event of the day took place. All the Pashada's near relations—brothers, sons, cousins and nephews, mostly men in the prime of life, and quite a hundred of them—came past the grand stand, in batches of about six at a time, in line and at full gallop. It was very fine; there was a pause between each batch, and as they passed the Pashada they swung their rifles forward, which were slung across their backs, fired, changed into the left hand, reversed, and swung it over their left shoulder in less time than it takes to write it. One gallant man threw his rifle into the air, caught it at full



LAGHOUAT. DECORATED CAMELS AT "LES BELLES COURSES"



METLILI; A MOZARITE CITY



gallop, before reversing it and slinging it behind his back.

It was a brilliant feat of arms, and the immobility of the Pashada relaxed a little as he cried out, "Gallopez, gallopez!" as each detachment passed him, and the horses dashed by like lightning. After this came the judging of the taste displayed in the decoration of the camels, and I only hope my beauty, arrayed in pink and yellow and silver, received a prize.

Then came the last event of the day, the *Défilé*, when the Pashada had the satisfaction of seeing all his sons and brothers and nephews and cousins dash past, on their steeds, *en masse*, at full gallop; and here the cinematograph people had the time of their lives, for the *Défilé* was heralded by bright banners, and the movement, variety, colour and eagerness will make it one of their very best films.

"C'est fini!" said the French colonel, when the last rider had passed, and the great event of the year was over.

All the spectators moved across the race-course, ourselves amongst the number, and getting into the motor, we soon caught up the picturesque procession of gallant riders who had

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taken part in the *Défilé*, and were able to observe at closer quarters the magnificence of the golden trappings, bridles, blinkers, and high-peaked saddles, in profile like the shape of the letter U, with a comfortable back like a chair.

Once more we drove into the city, made beautiful by its palm trees, while all around it lies the great still desert.

As we came through a rather narrow street leading to our Hôtel Sorace, we heard the strains of Arab music—a mounted band heralding the coming of the Pashada. The instruments sounded like fifes,—but the music has always a melancholy sound to our ears,—loud scarlet drums accentuating the rhythm, and when the band had passed, the stately old Pashada drove by with head erect, his two sons, arrayed as he was in gorgeous scarlet and gold, escorting him back in state.

## CHAPTER II

### GHARDAIA

*December 23-26, 1919.*

WE left Laghouat at 7.30 the following day, and soon got on to the desert track, the road being exceedingly good as far as Tilrempt. Here we came to a terebinth plantation—one of the only portions remaining of an ancient terebinth forest—which ran for miles across the desert. There is a tradition that a great belt of forest ran the whole way across Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia in the days of a famous native queen, called La Kahina, who figures large in early North African history before the coming of the Arabs. This Berber queen was of opinion that continuous forests were an impediment to national defence, and so she ordered great clearings to be made at intervals, and wholesale destruction of the trees in parts.

At the end of this grove of terebinth trees—

ghostly and bare—we came upon the comfortable caravanserai of Tilrempt. Here, indeed, was a Biblical picture, and we thought of Bethlehem as we were shown the inn. The caravanserai is four-square. On one side, the inn, its doors opening on the court; and beyond the inn, and opposite to it, are the stalls for the asses and the camels. We could imagine the overcrowded “inn,” and the only alternative being the stalls and the manger.

The variety and wonderful tameness of all the animals here was delightful: a jaguar dog (our name for the species), and a kind of bull-terrier; a cat with fur that matched the desert sand; rabbits, black, white, and brown; a pea-hen; a turkey who became a friend before the day was over; cocks and hens of every description; pretty black donkeys with white underneath; and outside the walls of the caravanserai camels, beautiful sheep, and black goats.

El Haïd, the hotel-keeper, shook hands with each of us, and told us that we were the first British, since 1914, to come to Tilrempt, and that he would give us a beautiful luncheon, if we could give him one hour to prepare it.

So A. and I wandered forth among the terebinth trees, and sat under their shade ; the air was fresh and warm, and the colours so soft and unusual that it felt good to be alive ; even the sheep welcomed us as we went among the flocks patting them, and later on I picked up a little lamb and brought it over to A. under her terebinth.

It was most amusing watching a camel laden for a far journey. He was made to lie down and a noose slipped over his doubled-up leg so that he could not rise ; sacks of various goods, wood, scrub, and vegetables, and produce of all sorts were arranged on his back and tied securely, while he snarled at everybody who came near, and when I copied his "snarl," he gave me a shrivelling look of utter disdain.

One of the Arab group with the camel could talk French, and so I told him we had come from Laghouat, and described the tournament of the day before, the *Défilé*, and the beautifully decorated camels, and he translated it into Arabic for the others.

Then the shepherd led his sheep away, and the camels, being laden, disappeared over the

crest of the hill, and I joined A. under her terebinth tree, where she had been making a sketch of the unusual scene.

There was a dream-like look over everything, the softest blue sky, and the old trees feathering against it almost like smoke, making a wonderful effect, more, perhaps, like our trees when covered with hoar-frost, and one felt inclined to rub one's eyes to see whether they were dreaming, or looking on realities.

After the hour had passed we came back. The tameness of all the animals made us try whether the little turkey hen would be friendly, and I scratched her head as if she were a parrot. This was such a success that I took further liberties, and tickled her wings and pulled her beak, and she became more friendly still. When we were at luncheon, she came to the door, inviting me to come out and play with her again, and as we drove away I heard her plaintive little cry as she came beside the motor to say good-bye.

The luncheon recalled Arabian Nights, as Mahomet brought in dish after dish, El Haïd being a past master in subtle flavours, and the national *couscous* was glorified with a

particularly piquant sauce. In fact, L. said it would not have disgraced the Ritz.

The journey on to Ghardaia from Tilrempt was 100 kilometres, but over a very bad road, merely a track in some places. We had one puncture which delayed us a little, and for about twenty kilometres we had to go dead slow.

There is a sense of space and peace and greatness in these desert regions, our eyes being rejoiced from time to time by the sight of camels, silhouetted against the sunlit sky, which is of the softest greeny-blue, or by a Bedouin leading his flock of sheep to the nearest watering-place, or by the chance sight of a gazelle amongst the low scrub.

The sun went down in royal splendour, and the colours of the after-glow were beyond description in their varied stages of loveliness—lemon-yellow fading into pink, orange losing itself in mauve, a green band of sky, and then the soft clearness of the blue—and just at this moment of wonderful effect we came upon the oasis of Berrian, the first of the Mozabite cities, some forty-four kilometres of desert lying between it and Ghardaia, the capital.

The tall palms showed black against the glowing sky, as the turn of the road revealed to us a dream city on a hill, pyramidal in form, white as a dove, and indescribably beautiful in the evening light.

After passing Berrian, we lit the lights and Jules held his gun aggressively and looked fierce. However, we were not molested, and did the rest of our journey in the African starlight, another experience of loveliness beyond description. The stars are so bright in the clear air that they look like fireworks—(oh, what a wicked thing to say!)—no, they look as if they were springing out of the heavens towards us.

Orion is the king of the skies, and we saw him slowly rise above the horizon and help to lighten us on our onward way, but the Great Bear is not seen till three or four hours after sunset.

We reached Ghardaia when it was quite dark and thus missed a good deal of the beauty, so Jules told us; but we would not have had the arrival different, for it was so mysterious, dashing into this far-away town by the motor-lights, and drawing up amongst a crowd of

Mozabites, some with very dark faces, of whose features we got occasional glances.

The crowd became so big at length that Jules begged us to remain in the motor, and some iron gates were opened, and presently the car was manœuvred safely under the arcades supporting the loggia above, and thus we got away from the sea of strange faces.

Then came the moment for seeing our rooms—lofty, bare rooms with vaulted ceilings, only a bed, a table, a chair, a jug, a basin, and a looking-glass, and once more it felt like a dream, for perfect replicas of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob followed us about from room to room.

Neither Abraham nor Isaac spoke French, so Jacob was the interpreter. The hotel had had no visitors since the war, and the little restaurant in connection with it had collapsed ; but our Mozabites were kindly, simple, and dignified, and promised to do their best for us.

We were very sleepy after twelve hours of strong desert air, and our little feast of bread, boiled eggs and Turkish coffee was most sustaining.

Such humours connected with that feast ! Isaac and Jacob remained in the room the

whole time, and the gentle and refined Jacob, drawing up a chair, sat down with us at our table, and when the coffee arrived he poured it out for us, and discoursed pleasantly to us in French, and told us he was a schoolmaster, describing his school, and how many children went to it, and what he teaches them, while we ate our funny little meal of eggs without egg-cups—also *café noir* and dry bread, for the camel butter had to be removed to a far corner.

An apple and a pear were produced, but knowing this to be the land of dates, I said, “*Les Anglais aiment beaucoup les dates !*” Whereupon Jacob inquired at what hour of the morning we wished him to bring them to us, or *could* we wait till 4.30 in the afternoon, for then his school would be over, and he would bring us a big dish !

To wake up at Ghardaia next morning and realise we were in the Great Sahara, in the capital of the Mozabites, on Christmas Eve, as the sun blazed through our windows, and the cloudless sky suggested midsummer—well, it was difficult !

Our rooms opened out on to a loggia with a stone parapet. Isaac, of the night before,

appeared with a watering-pot just as we were going out. "Je vais arroser les chambres!" he explained, and all the stone floors of our bedrooms were accordingly doused.

Later, in the afternoon, we went to Beni Isguen, the holy city. There are special laws in connection with this city: no stranger, no foreigner must sleep in it—nobody but a born Mozabite.

Mozabites are not Arabs, they are one of the original native Berber races resident in North Africa before the Arab invasion, now followers of Mahomet, but with certain differences of ritual. In the Middle Ages the various points in dispute caused a cleavage—a cleavage of such severity that the Mozabites were driven out of all the Arab towns and villages. Finding no city of refuge, with indomitable courage they chose the most arid portion of the Sahara, at some time during the thirteenth century, and claimed it as their own. Here, with determination and heroic energy, they sunk more than a thousand wells, some of them sixty feet deep, and thus created the group of oases known as the M'Zab country.

Date-palms and other trees were introduced,

and seven cities arose, each crowned with a minaret, picturesque in its simplicity, from whence the Muezzin calls the faithful to worship every three hours. Ghardaia is the capital, but Beni Isguen is the sacred city.

We were received with great kindness by the Fathers of the city, and invited to a little feast, the Caïd guiding us through the narrow streets to his house. It was a little house, but truly Mozabite. A square room, airy and cool, and an upper gallery in the centre, supported by twelve pillars, and surmounted by a domed skylight. Under this dome was placed the table ; its position gave one the Arabian Nights feeling. It was spread out with large bottles of water, and many dishes of different kinds of sweets, cakes and fruits.

The Caïd, the Cadi, and the Khalifa entertained us. I saw no difference in the Mozabite costume, except that the turban of the Caïd was bound with gold instead of black camels'-hair worsted.

Our feast began with water—good water which is a real luxury, and has to be brought from four miles away in goat-skins, on the back of a donkey.

I had felt desperately thirsty for the last few days, as the air is very dry, and my lips were very hot, so two tumblers of good water were as nectar of the gods. Only in a country where it is precious do we realise how we all depend upon good water. Next, we were given coffee and biscuits, dates and *rahas-la-coum*, and presently tea and peppermint.

The Caïd of Beni Isguen was genial and kind, and they were much interested in hearing all about the races at Laghouat, and thrilled at the prospect of a visit from the cinematographers.

After tea was over, we were taken for a walk through the sacred city, through narrow streets till we came to the central market-place, a most important centre, where there is a market every day.

Mozabites have the character of being energetic, industrious and progressive. They are independent and travel widely, the men putting in fifteen years or so in Algiers, or other large cities in the "Tell"—fifteen years of honest labour, as merchants or traders, butchers or grocers, sometimes even as bankers—and when they consider that they have become sufficiently prosperous, they return once more to the

M'Zab country, to their beloved cities, where they settle down amongst their palm trees, sending the younger members of their family away to make their fortunes in the same manner.

L. bought six boxes of *rahat-la-coum* in the market-square. One of our fellow-guests—a Mozabite—looked puzzled. “Monsieur, then—he is *négociant* in England ?” I verily believe that he thought that the whole journey was an affair of business. We were going to ransack the markets of the Sahara for goods, and then turn an honest penny on them.

Now comes the funny method of purchase in the Mozabite market. L. thought he would buy a rug, and he was told it was fifteen francs. “But that is only the first price ;—say twenty.” This done, the Mozabite with the carpet held it like a sandwichman in front of him and went tearing down the market-place, crying out : “Vingt francs !” and presently some one called out “Vingt-deux !” and then he returned to L. and said, “C'est vingt-deux francs !” “Vingt-trois !” said L., and the man went tearing down the market-place again.

As I walked round the market I saw the

well-known figure striding along, and as he passed me he looked over his shoulder and said confidentially, "Maintenant c'est vingt-quatre!"

This went on endlessly, and we went away without knowing whether L. had got his carpet or not. The variety of the faces of the buyers and the keenness of the sellers, the poorness of many of the goods up for barter, some not even pretending to be new—all was most amusing to watch ; and this man was only one of dozens, striding up and down the market-place, calling out loudly, in a sing-song voice, the different sums offered for their goods at the moment ; and so it goes on day after day, in this sacred city. The days are long ; time is a detail ; buying and selling is the romance of their lives. The sun was setting and the air was cold, but we were loth to leave because it was all so new, so queer and so interesting.

When we arrived at Ghardaia, the gentle Jacob of the night before was waiting with a plate of dates as an offering. He gave me a great deal of interesting information about the Berber races, with their distinct characteristics, descendants of the aborigines of Barbary—that

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wide region stretching from the borders of Egypt to the Atlantic Ocean. Then he ticked off upon his fingers the numbers of conquering nations by whom they had been successively dominated —the Carthaginians, Romans, Vandals, Byzantines, Arabs, Turks, and now, a part of that great region, by the French. Then, seizing a book of mine, he wrote in a scholarly hand : “Les Kabyles ; Les Chaouias ; Les Riffins (Maroc) ; Les Touaregs ; et Les Mozabites”—mixed races, all of them, to a certain extent, but all possessing distinctive Berber characteristics. We were told that their number is estimated at between three and four millions.

Christmas Day, next morning, and brilliant sunshine. It is almost accurate to say that it never rains here. In Laghouat there had been rain five months ago, but at Ghardaia there had been none for five years. Being Christmas Day, we paid a visit to Père David, one of the *frères armés*, an order of missionary monks instituted by Cardinal Lavigerie for work in the Sahara.

Father David is a saint who has lived in this remote place for thirty years. He is quiet, gentle, learned, and refined, and being a fellow-Christian, we were anxious to greet him on

Christmas Day. We were shown into his sitting-room, which is also his library, and he evidently loves his books.'

His hands were very white, also his garments, and he had the face of an idealist. He does not try to combat the faith of the Mozabite, but lives the life of a good Christian, and teaches cleanliness, straightness, and goodness, thus trying to "raise the sons of earth." And this life, lived among them for years, tells.

When first he came, the Mozabites would have nothing to say to him ; they would not even allow him water ; but now he is their doctor, their adviser, and their learned man. His conversation flowed evenly and pleasantly, and he was more than ready to answer any question we put to him. The difference in the Mozabite worship consists of non-essentials, other Mohammedans prostrating themselves five times at prayer, whereas the Mozabites do so four times. The Arabs, he assured us, do all they can to hinder progress. They tear up the milestones when possible, and uproot the telegraph posts, and make a fine fire out of them, and are always more inclined to follow old ways than new. Altogether this visit to the

good *père blanc* on Christmas Day was a refreshing variety, and we parted with mutual expressions of goodwill. The habit of the *frères armés* is unique—a white *burnous* and a red fez.

It was hot in the middle of the day, but we walked through narrow streets and explored the town, which is built pyramid-wise over the crest of a hill, and crowned by the mosque, which we visited.

From this point of vantage, we looked down upon the town surrounding us, and upon the flat white roofs, which are such a feature in every Eastern town.

So much of the everyday business of life seemed to be in progress on the different roofs, that we were greatly interested in the various little scenes, of which we got a peep. Women and children, bright spots of colour in these moving pictures, all engaged busily. Early this morning I had watched an elderly Arab who, like a prophet of old, deep in thought, was walking backwards and forwards on his roof, opposite our hotel. Presently we went into the market-place, a square filled with movement, variety, and colour, and here we saw more camels

together than we have seen yet, most of them lying down with a tight noose round the fore-leg (the knee-halter) to prevent them moving. They were being packed with every kind of merchandise, and going in caravans to Ouargla across the desert, and also to Biskra, and places more distant still. I love the movement of a camel and the way it holds its head, and its calm indifference to life in general. "Time is nothing, and distance is nothing, where all goes on as if it were a thousand years ago. Men are but waves upon the sea of life ; pile up my burdens, only stay your hand, if you remember, at the last straw ! "

While watching the donkeys laden with sacks, or with goat-skins filled with the precious drinking-water for sale, up came the Caïd of Ghardaia, who, through his interpreter, told us that it would give him great pleasure if we would have tea with him in the market-place at two o'clock. He had two friends with him in blue *burnouses* with whom we all shook hands, and after doing this, they raised their hands to their mouths, a mark of great respect.

We had our Christmas luncheon in the open

air on the Loggia—eggs and tea, oranges and biscuits, which it only required a little imagination to turn into turkey, boar's head, plum-pudding and mince-pies, and soon after we made our way to the market-place, to have a further little feast with the Caïd. This took place under the Arcade which runs right round. His little table was spread with fruits, and we drank strong coffee and eat *rahat-la-coum*, dates and oranges, and as usual reverted to our fruitful topic of conversation—the Laghouat fêtes, and the coming of the cinematographers. Unfortunately, our conversation was through an interpreter, which took the edge off the pleasure of it.

From the minaret the Muezzin gave his call to prayer at three o'clock, and we watched several devout Mozabites spring up from their traffic and, facing east, begin their prayer standing, with both hands raised, from the platform in the centre of the market-place. Then they slowly knelt and prostrated themselves, touching the ground with their foreheads ; they do this four times because they are Mozabites.

On our way back, we noticed over many

of the doors of the houses the mark of a hand pressed into the whitewash and painted in red or in blue ; this brings good luck, representing the hand of Fatma, the daughter of the Prophet—the hand which is to bless the household, and keep off the Evil Eye.

We are sorry to leave Ghardaia, a city of intense interest and charm, where time seems to stand still.

## CHAPTER III

BOU SAÂDA

*December 26-31, 1919.*

WE had a fine send-off from many Arabs and Mozabites—they all love shaking hands and are easy and kind in their manners, and they crowded round the motor before we drove away. I am always on the point of saying, “The morning was cloudless,” but our good Mozabite friends would welcome clouds gratefully, were they only the size of a man’s hand, as a variety from the blazing sun.

We sped along over bare, strange mountains, boulder-strewn plains, and then by long tracts of country covered with scrub. As usual the mountains suggested a series of forts, varied by an occasional pyramid orange in colour, pink in the distance, with pure blue shadows, and of a yellow shade near at hand. Up hill and down hill, across long wastes of desert till we got to Berrian.

Here there is a Mozabite cemetery, and, as in Ghardaia, on each grave there is a broken pitcher, and a leather "scrip" suggesting the dead, and offerings to their memory—often a plate, and sometimes, we are told, the women on Fridays bring knives and forks, a mystical feeding of the dead which must be a relic of some belief of the remote past.

L. got out to take photographs, and I began to sing to amuse the children, and, to my great delight, a little Mozabite danced to the tune ! After this came a stony, uneven track, and in the heavy sand the motor stuck fast (and now the twentieth century may well blush while I confess)—it had to be ignominiously hauled out of its *panne*—by a camel ! Thus the incident appears officially in Jules' accounts :—

“ Panne dans le Sable,  
8 Personnes, 1 Chameau,  
15 francs ” !

When we stuck, and before the camel appeared, we had made up our minds to walk twelve kilometres, so we were on our way and missed the joy of seeing eight Arabs pushing behind, and one camel pulling in front !

We tramped on and on, till, at the top of one hill, we saw to our joy Tilrempt of the terebinth trees. The motor caught us up twice and gave us a little help, but the tyres were in a bad way, and eventually A. and I arrived footsore and weary, at about a quarter to six, having fasted all day since our early morning tea.

Whatever excitement our arrival might have caused on any other occasion, at this moment it was eclipsed by a notable event in the annals of Tilrempt. As we were nearing the gate of the caravanserai, a strange sight greeted our eyes—time was not prepared to stand still at Tilrempt—a gaily painted, clattering auto-bus with sounding horn was passing the terebinth trees, and swung round and entered the courtyard before our astonished eyes. It was garlanded with flowers, palms, wreaths, and French flags, and on its highly enamelled sides were painted the words “Algér-Ghardaia.”

This was a tangible proof of the progressive spirit of the Mozabites, for the scheme of linking up Ghardaia with Algiers emanated from the “Société Mozabite d’Algér.” To

them it was a most important event, and the triumphant progress was quite an amusing thing to witness, the thirty-seven proud Mozabites travelling by motor-bus (pioneers all of them) sharing with us the hospitality of the Tilrempt caravanserai, though I believe that they had to sleep in the courtyard, under the stars of heaven. The gates of the caravanserai were locked at night and four armed men guarded it.

Next day we had a good run from Tilrempt to Laghouat, but on a lonely track. Literally, we went fifty miles without seeing a single living thing—with the exception of one gazelle.

I forgot to say that yesterday, before our camel incident, we stopped to examine one of the desert wells. There were several flocks of sheep waiting to be watered, and a strong black camel worked the well. A goat-skin was the bucket attached to a very long rope, for the well was deep. There were two high posts, leaning towards each other like the letter "A," and the cross bar was the axle of a single grooved wheel over which the rope ran. But now comes the funny part: the other end

of the rope was attached to the camel, and the act of his walking away drew the bucket up. The goat-skin was leaking when it came up, which added to the quaintness ; the water was poured into a trough which was connected with a long drinking-trough, and at the far end of his tether the camel turned round again, and advanced majestically towards us, the bucket, naturally, sinking once more into the well. Thus buckets were lowered two thousand years ago, and more, and there was a feeling of the dignity of ages about the whole proceeding which was most impressive.

We stopped twice between Tilrempt and Laghouat, the first time to examine some of the Pashada's flocks. The patriarch Job had fourteen thousand sheep, but the Pashada owns one million. Our second delay was in order to visit an Arab encampment.

We walked across the scrub to the nearest tent and shook hands with the Bedouin to whom it belonged, who gave us a kindly welcome. The black, or the striped tents of the Nomads, made of camels' hair, are a striking feature of the desert, and we had often wanted to visit one of them. Our host



A WELL IN THE DESERT



BOU SAÅDA. LUNCHEON AT THE "CHASSE"



introduced us to his old mother, and also to his pretty little wife, who wore a good many ornaments—hoop-earrings, bracelets, anklets, and bright dashes of colour—and it was pleasant to see her smiling face unveiled, as, with a charming instinct of courtesy, she ran to the goat-skin and filled a little bowl with water, which she offered to us.

The encampment covered a good deal of ground, though the tents were low and primitive, and appeared to be divided into apartments by hanging curtains.

Now once more we were nearing the city of Laghouat, and the palms showed clearly, growing tall and vigorous in their well-watered home.

Jules now broke to us that the Agha of Laghouat and his nephew, Ben Cherif, had been greatly disappointed on our former visit, at not having had an opportunity of entertaining us, as they had a special cake for us ; so on this visit, very soon after our arrival, we received an invitation to tea.

We were met outside his house by the Agha, and introduced to his nephew, and we walked with them in a pretty garden, bordered by

orange trees, and having the remains of hollyhocks and Michaelmas daisies not yet cut down, roses and geraniums in flower, lemon and pepper trees, and a fountain in the middle of the garden.

The nephew of our host, Ben Cherif, was charming. He had been taken prisoner during the war, and carried away for thirty months to Silesia. He has written a book on the subject of Mecca, *Les Saintes Villes d'Islam*, which, we hear, is very good. He has beautiful courtly manners, and an attractive voice, and he also walked in the Victory Procession in Paris.

Next morning we left Laghouat at 7.30. Larbi, the "boots" of the hotel, had the usual superfine Arab manner, and yesterday after A. and I had asked him to bring us endless cans of hot water, and also wood for the fire—having a little laundry work on hand—he did so with so good a grace that A. said something pretty in the way of "thank you." "Ah," he said, while stoking the fire, "I look upon you as my own family!" Larbi had served in the war, and gave a spirited account of how well he got on with the British, and how he was

treated as he lay wounded in a British hospital. He had picked up a few words of English, which he loved using. He was at the door to bid us good-bye, as was also Ben Cassim, an Arab with a kind face, who, more or less, ran the hotel, as cook *and* head waiter. We shook hands all round, and we had a long, long journey, getting into three hundred kilometres, from Laghouat to Bou Saâda.

It was terribly cold the first hour, so much so that L. stopped the motor so that we could get out and sun ourselves. The Sahara has so often been presented to us in books as a furnace, that the intense cold in the winter mornings and evenings was quite a revelation.

At Djelfa, which was about half-way, we met one of our Laghouat acquaintances, a nephew of the Pashada's, with a very dark skin, in Spahi uniform of royal red and royal blue, a lovely blot of colour in dull Djelfa. Somehow it amused us very much coming across an acquaintance in Djelfa; he was the nephew deputed by the Pashada to carve the *meschoui*.

We got away as soon as we could from Djelfa, as we had still one hundred and thirty kilometres or more to go, and now it was all

new country. We had left the Great Sahara and were entering the Petit Sahara.

It was a very interesting road, great red rocks, and a fascinating river, and high date-palms in groves at one point, where L. stopped to photograph and Jules bought eggs of a brilliantly dressed old woman.

The long-suffering motor was required to cross the bed of a river several times, which was sometimes an exciting experience ; but at about five o'clock we arrived at Bou Saâda, an oasis in the mountains.

#### ACCOUNT OF "THE CHASSE"

By L.

At Bou Saâda the French Resident on whom I called was so kind as to ask the Caïd of Bou Saâda if he could arrange a shooting-party for me. This he did, and called to his assistance two other Caïds, the Caïd of Kaled and Caïd Ahmed Ben Diff of Oued Cheir.

A Caïd is head of a district, town or village.

The three Caïds arranged that we should get away by three in the morning, so that we should reach our shooting-ground before sunrise. There was considerable difficulty, how-

ever, in collecting the men, but they finally arrived, and we started for our day's sport. We proceeded at a walk, for it was pitch dark.

Our road led us from the town out into the desert, or perhaps it would be more correct to say semi-desert, for here and there were patches of more or less cultivated land, intermixed with the stretches of sand. This we could see when after a time it gradually became lighter and day broke in all its glory over the flat plain that we were traversing. Our procession was quite lengthy, with the three Caïds and their many followers and retainers.

We now proceeded at a quicker pace, trotting and galloping from time to time, until at length we reached the point at which it was proposed to stop, or rather from which it was intended to start the stalking of any game we could come across. Soon a herd of gazelles was seen in the far distance, and those who had horses that could gallop went after them.

The Caïd Ahmed Ben Diff was skilful at riding down and shooting both gazelles and birds from his horse. This he accomplished this day, shooting a gazelle and a brace of birds from the saddle.

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The guns that the natives use are light scatter-guns, and the Caïd informed me that the powder was exceedingly bad. This was a universal complaint both in Algeria and Tunisia.

Caïd Ahmed Ben Diff is remarkably handsome. He wore a beautiful dark blue *burnous*, and rode a magnificent horse with splendid saddle and bridle, and was a very striking and romantic-looking figure, and a very charming man. He informed me that he had been ill, or he would have brought falcons with him, such as he usually uses for hawking.

In the middle of the day we ceased operations for a time and assembled for luncheon. I took several photographs of the picturesque group.

After luncheon an attempt was made to drive a herd of gazelles past us. We were placed behind such scanty cover as a bush afforded, while the remainder of the party endeavoured to ride round and drive them in our direction, but though they used every artifice to effect this, the gazelles obstinately refused to entertain the idea and insisted on galloping by at a distance of about five hundred yards.

The shooting by Caïd Ben Diff of two birds



"THE CHASSE" AT BOU SAÂDA



was the last event of this pleasant day. Stalking them carefully, he approached on his horse as near as he could and shot them both with a right and left from the saddle.

It was now decided that it was time to return home; we had a long way to go, and the horses had had quite enough work to do.

(*Continued.*)

A. and I happened to be at the hotel door, almost at the hour of sunset, when the procession was just arriving home, with a beautiful gazelle across one of the saddles of the servants. Now in the evening light, our three Arabs of the chase, mounted on their horses, in their flowing robes, made us think of Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthasar.

We spent three nights altogether at Bou Saâda, which has a good lively market, at which a sale of camels had been taking place. But the feature of Bou Saâda is its oasis on which the town is built, and the grove of palm trees shelters the tomb of a Marabout. All round the oasis are stiff, stern mountains, which become crimson in the morning and in the evening light, and beyond it is desert sand.

We left Bou Saâda on the last day of the year, and after we had gone twenty kilometres, the cold wind was so cutting that we got out and walked, and the chauffeur began to see to something that was not quite right with the car. Meanwhile A. and I walked on and on and presently sat down by the side of the road and watched a shepherd and his sheep, and some camels go by, and many big Arabs on little donkeys. We were laughing at all the warnings that Jules had given us on the subject of Arabs, and now, after having sojourned amongst them in their native cities, we found it very difficult to look upon them as highwaymen. We have got into a way of giving each Arab as he passes a wave of the hand, which is generally answered by a broad grin, showing snow-white, perfect teeth, and sometimes by their hands being raised to their mouths in respect.

Presently, as we sat by the side of the road, an old Arab came trotting along, alone on a white horse, a most picturesque figure with a blue cloak and red sash. He was puzzled at seeing us quietly sitting there, twenty kilometres from anywhere, so we explained in

French that we belonged to a motor which he would come across if he walked on. He besought us, in Arabic, to do him the honour of mounting his horse. We refused, with infinite politeness, in French, and the Arab rode on. Soon our curiosity as to what had befallen the motor led us to retrace our steps, when suddenly round the corner of the hill we saw the old Arab coming along in our direction once more.

Again he implored us to get up on his horse, so, for fun, I did so. The stirrup was entirely mediæval, the sort of stirrup used by the Crusaders, and I mounted by it and felt very grand on my Arab steed, and was just experiencing the new sensation of a back to the saddle, when the hum of the motor was heard and I had to dismount ; but we shook hands cordially with our Arab cavalier, and the motor just managed to get us safely into the half-way town, Aumale, before again breaking down.

Here it was more or less put to rights, and we had still 120 kilometres to go, but the afternoon drive was a beautiful ending to our tour. We crossed a long chain of mountains by a road which is a triumph of French

engineering. The gradients are so gentle that we never felt a jar, and the motor sailed up the mountains at an even pace and turned the corners brilliantly.

We saw above us spirals we were about to reach, and looked on beyond to a streak of white road across the ever-changing colour of the mountain pass. Now we had gone over it, and were beginning to descend, a new and even more beautiful valley opening out beneath us.

Jules, meanwhile, told us a tragic story of a *diligence* that had swung over the precipice six weeks ago at that spot, and been hurled from these heights, two kilometres, into the river below, at which we were looking ; and he also told us that early in 1914, on that very road, he was crossing the mountains, and amongst the company were two Germans. "This is a very fine road, isn't it ?" remarked somebody. "A very fine road indeed," answered the German ; "and it will be finer still when it belongs to Germany !" "I could gladly have popped him over the precipice," concluded Jules.

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All nice things come to an end, though they

leave the afterglow of a delightful memory, and we left the mountains behind us, with all the Caïds, Aghas, Pashadas, Dream-cities, Camels, Bedouins, and Desert-delights, and we arrived at Algiers before dark, just in time to say good-bye to the Old Year, 1919.

## CHAPTER IV

### THROUGH THE KABYLE COUNTRY

### To BISKRA

*January 6-12, 1920.*

AFTER coming back from our tour in the Desert we stayed one week in Algiers, and then set forth again. This time we went towards the Kabyle Mountains, which showed blue in the distance from our hotel.

Passing through cultivated farm-lands, we gradually got into country that was more picturesque, coming at length to magnificent scenery, where the River Isser flows through a deep gorge between precipitous mountains, sheer blocks of rock, like mighty walls, leading on through a bright and pleasant valley to Palestro.

About fifty years ago, Palestro was the scene of a bloody massacre, when every French resident was murdered. The Kabyles, as a

race, have been less dominated by foreign invaders than any other of the inhabitants of North Africa. While the Arabs were ground under the heel of Turkey, the Kabyles maintained complete independence and even extorted tribute from the Turks, whenever the latter passed through their country. Therefore, they resisted the French occupation with might and main, encouraged by their Marabouts, who are an unofficial clergy peculiar to North Africa.

Needless to say, it was an evil day for their freedom when they tried their power against France. The Kabyles are passionately devoted to their mountainous homes, and their liberty had not been interfered with in the least up to this time; but now a grim French fort frowns from the mountains down upon the villages, a visible and daily reminder of the power of France.

Soon we drove through Tizi-Oozou, the capital of Kabylia, and now we began to ascend, and were keenly interested in the pretty Kabyle villages crowning the tops of each hill. Every turn brought fresh and lovely views over the valley below, the scenery being so varied that one enthusiast has written, "If all the artists in

the world came to Kabylia, there would be enough subjects to keep them busy for a year."

The women are not veiled ; they dress in very bright colours, wearing quantities of native jewellery, hoop-earrings of barbaric proportions, heavy silver chains in great variety, broad armlets and anklets, and a circular ornament on the forehead, tinkling with pendants, of the coloured stones of the country, semi-polished, and set in silver. These look regal in combination with a brilliant handkerchief binding their heads, and when the lady of the house goes a-marketing she crams on all the family jewels !

A Kabyle woman is therefore an arresting sight among her mountains ; but one curious custom prevails, that of tattooing, and more often than not they are tattooed with the sign of the Cross. I saw one girl in Algiers dressed like a European, and she had the double sign of the Cross on forehead and chin.

The origin of this custom seems to be lost in mystery, for the Kabyles are Mohammedans, and yet the Koran forbids tattooing. Some authorities state that in the second and third centuries Christian slaves fled to these mountains,

where they were treated well and given work, and that, through them, some of the Kabyles became Christian converts. The oldest inscription that has been found in their country, dating from the eighth century, contains a prayer, "O Lord, protect Thy servant Marie," which seems to strengthen the idea that the crosses may have had a Christian origin.

And now, after wending our way upwards for over 3000 feet, we come to Fort National, "a sword in the heart of Kabylia," the French fort, grim and formidable, dominating mountain and valley. We drove under an arched gate into this strange town among the mountains ; walls twelve feet high, enclosing thirteen acres, all strongly fortified.

As it was late we did not delay, but ascended yet higher, the snow-capped mountains of the Djurdjura Range, beyond the valley, being beautiful to look at. There was one crimson rift in a thick bank of grey clouds, and then came twilight, but we did not arrive at Michelet till the stars were in the sky.

Michelet stands very high, and the views next morning were beautiful ; the weather perfect, though cold enough at such a height.

We stood on a terrace facing the Djurdjura mountains, and looked across at the African Alps, with their strangely irregular peaks covered with snow—the highest of these, the “little Kadijah,” measuring 7,572 feet. They were wonderfully beautiful as they became clearer and clearer with the rising sun, and then we looked at a little Kabyle village near us, wondering at the close compact building of the houses, with their low, pointed red-tiled roofs, and their walls of mud and stone; very poor-looking little dwellings when seen close at hand, without chimneys or even windows as far as we could make out. But in the distance they are perfectly fascinating. The one we were studying at Michelet was in shadow, and suggested to us a flight of birds just alighting, with drooping wings, the low sloping roofs giving this effect, and we half expected to see it rise swiftly from its peak, show black against the morning light for an instant, and then disappear over the hills.

As we watched, the light revealed peak after peak in this maze of mountains, each crowned with its own little village perched precipitously on the rocky summit. We found them special

points of interest during our drive of eight hours through panoramic scenery of the grandest description.

Many of the hills in Kabylia are thickly wooded, a fine contrast to the bold upstanding rocks of a warm ochre colour, rising sheer from the hillsides in places, like gigantic pillar-stones. The Kabyles are evidently good agriculturalists, for the land is in excellent order, although it was a little early in the year to judge of the vegetation. They have herds of cattle and sheep, and plantations of fruit trees, especially fig trees, and these are splendid specimens. Several of the mountain-sides are covered with them, but being still grey and leafless, they had the appearance of a ghostly forest, in contrast with the olives and the cork trees.

We arrived at Bougie about four o'clock, a town on a deep bay in the Mediterranean, and very beautifully backed by high mountains. Of great antiquity, it is especially interesting from the fact that it shows traces of its different owners from Carthaginian times onwards. It was under Spanish rule for a considerable period. A great deal of Roman brickwork remains, and

Saracen fortifications, a picturesque arch in ruins, and a wall, traces everywhere of the town having been larger in bygone days, and far more important than the Bougie of to-day.

There is a massive mountain called Gouraya, which we saw from every point of view yesterday during our tour over the mountains of La Grande Kabylie. This mountain towers over Bougie, and faithful Arabs who are unable to make the greater pilgrimage to Mecca are permitted to take a lesser pilgrimage to Bougie—from whence they must ascend Gouraya, and attain merit when they arrive at the top. Bougie is known as “The little Mecca.” As we drove away next morning we went past the Saracen wall, and saw an English ship at anchor in the harbour.

The drive round the Algerian *corniche* was fine, mountains on one side, Mediterranean on the other, and presently, going inland, we came to a great gorge, the Gorge de Chabet, which is impressively colossal and narrow, and winds on for five miles, mountains 6000 feet high on either side, and rocks like perpendicular walls.

Coming out of the gorge, all was changed as in a dissolving view. The vivid orange

and pink rocks, and the purples of the mountains, gave place to a yellow world. Mild, meek, round hills and mountains of a very monotonous sand colour were in front of us, and all the romance and magic of colour in the beautiful scenery we had been going through for two days and a half vanished like a dream.

Once more we began to ascend, and come nearer to a mountain with a snowy top, which had looked blue and beautiful in the distance ; but it lost all distinction as we came near, and gradually passed over it. White snow and yellow sand are a harsh contrast, and the wind was very cold.

I think it was at this point that Jules reminded us of the day we were at Laghouat, three weeks ago. "Do you know," he said, "on that very day three Mozabites and a child were murdered on the road between Ghardaia and Laghouat?" We suggested vendetta, but he seemed to think it was common robbery.

The point of the story was how carefully he protects us on our way. All through the desert he kept his gun aggressively handy,

and as we were approaching Ghardaia, in the dark, he suddenly fired it off in the air, and looking round explained, "I did that so as *not* to frighten the ladies." (A mysterious remark!)

Presently, after miles across a lofty, lonely, yellow table-land, actually in the snow, we arrived at Sétif, where we stopped for the night. A town of some size, busy, bustling, and entirely French, with attractive shops, paper money of its own, boulevards, public buildings, and Roman remains.

The following morning we set out once more for the desert, and on a lonely bit of road a motor dashed past us at lightning speed. Jules looked round and said, "There has been an accident by that motor, perhaps a very bad one!" and we saw that it had caused a terrified mule to bolt over the side of the road, and it was lying on its back in a tangle, with the cart pinning it down. The driver, an old Arab, had been pitched out and was only half conscious.

However, mandarin cordial and water brought him to, and the mule was extricated and seemed none the worse, and we then

continued on our way, the motor humming along like a good Samaritan.

We had luncheon by the roadside, and gave some hungry little Arab boys some of the remains, bread and dates and a tin of potted meat. The bread and dates they could eat straight away, but the potted meat would have to be shown to their father, and if he was not certain about the infidel's meat being possible for his sons, the tin would have to be inspected by the Marabout, and his word would decide the weighty matter.

We reached a most delightful place before sunset, El Kantara, the Golden Gate of the Sahara, and walked down the gorge, which was orange gold on the sunny side, an indescribable glory of colour. The afterglow turned the wild, piled-up masses of rocks into glowing pink, and as we walked onwards to the tomb of a Marabout, the landscape grew gradually colourless against a vivid yellow sky, which faded into the mysterious veil of violet which I have never seen except in these regions.

There are two villages near by, known as the Red Village and the White Village; and on our way we passed a haunted house.

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Would that we could have heard the stories first-hand! When the veil of violet deepens and before the starlight comes, soft padded footsteps are heard around that house, and a line of spectral camels are seen moving down the valley with rhythmic tread, a sight that fills the villagers with fear.

Outside the first village we saw a saucer full of white feathers. "That is to ward off the Evil Eye," we were told. There was a man in the village under its power, and his only chance of cure lay in the white feathers, for no demon dare pass such a dish.

It is pathetic to hear of the various nostrums believed to have power in counteracting the effects of the Evil Eye. Coral and all red stones of the desert are supposed to have a certain power, and if a woman tears her blue dress, she must put in a patch of red to placate the demon, red being the colour of blood. A saucepan on the corner of the roof deflects the path of the evil spirit, and perhaps sends him next door. To this day, the science of medicine as practised by the Arabs is of about the time of Hippocrates.

The profession of doctor is hereditary, and

the secrets connected with it are handed down from father to son. They possess one herb, we were told, which has anaesthetic powers.

The Red and the White villages are built of mud bricks, and the timbers of the houses are made of date-palm. The mud walls are braced by these, which stick out like innumerable water-spouts, and some of the houses simply bristle with them.

Then, as a variety from the monotony of mud bricks, we were surprised to see a carved corner-stone of Roman times, or a finely carved capital, or an inscribed stone enshrined amongst the mud walls and their water-spouts.

Of course, Rome had discovered this oasis of beauty : a Roman fortress (in the days when the third legion had their headquarters at Lambessa) was built upon this favoured spot. A Roman bridge remains, of one fine arch thrown across the gorge and giving the place its name.

The path leading down to the river lay between mud walls, for the date-palms are portioned out into "allotments," each jealously guarded by a mud-brick wall, the doors, made from the root of the palm tree, being strongly secured.

In the river bed we met a personage, a strange Frenchman, who has for ten years lived as a native in the White City. He was tall and very good-looking, with perfect manners, and clothes which appeared to be half French, half Arab. He carried in one hand a jug made of a goat-skin, and in the other an engraved metal cup. He was by the stream getting his supply of water, and looked entirely unsuitable for such a life. He is a Comte de V., and his father has three châteaux in France, and a house in Paris, and why the handsome Count G. elects to live in a house of mud bricks, without even a chair in his room, on the edge of the Great Sahara, is a puzzle to any one who comes across him.

We started for Biskra soon after this, only a run of fifty kilometres. The Aurés Mountains on our left looked warm and pink in the afternoon sunshine, with soft blue shadows. Their outlines are rounded and regular as a rule, but, as we passed along, we noticed one strange perpendicular rock, brighter still in colour, because nearer, rising abruptly from one of the spurs of the hills, with its pinnacle crowned by what gave us the impression of being a Norman

Castle, with towers, battlements and keep complete! The illusion was most curious and intensified by the well-defined shadows.

The natives who live in this part of the world are Chaouias, a Berber race, very like the Kabyles in appearance, most of them tattooed and covered with jewellery, and wearing very bright colours. We were told that brigands haunt these hills, and that two or three lately raided a district round about Biskra.

A herd of camels passed us, bearing burdens consisting of many large wooden cases, identical in size and shape, filled with dates. These hard deal boxes, suggestive of the railway or the hold of a ship, or at any rate Covent Garden market, looked strangely out of place on the backs of the patient camels. I am sure they much prefer the local packing-cases, the dates being simply sewn up in a goat-skin.

Presently we arrived at Biskra, the Beni-Mora of Robert Hichens' *Garden of Allah*, which has been so wonderfully described by him that each traveller to this oasis-city experiences the sensation of having arrived at a spot well known to him. From the tower, mentioned in the beginning of the story, we

watched in wonder the vision of colour in the sunset hour—the “Delectable Mountains” bathed in rose-red radiance, the mysterious desert losing itself in twilight distance.

The supreme interest of the town is its situation on the verge of the great desert, and the beauty of Count Landon’s garden, where the “Wilderness becomes like Eden, and the desert like the garden of the Lord.”

From a book called *Among the Berbers*, by Anthony Wilkin, is the following quotation :

“The grounds of the Château Landon are by far the most striking thing in Biskra, and show what energy and intelligence, backed by capital, could and can do in the Sahara.”

And then he proceeds to describe the garden :

“The Count’s mansion and its outlying saloons are in themselves worth a visit, but the gardens are exquisite and worth the journey to Biskra.

“In the first place every kind of Algerian tree and shrub and flower, which can stand a moderate heat, are there, lining walks smooth and hard and white of the stamped and rolled mud of the oasis. Not a dead leaf is to be seen, scarcely a speck of dust. Masses of bougain-

villea, purple and scarlet, climbed over a little pavilion in the centre of the garden, producing an effect more bizarre and theatrical than one could have wished. Winding alleys dived beneath masses of tropical vegetation, out of whose cool shades came the merry tinkle and splash of running streams. Hedges of geraniums and cacti recalled southern Europe, groves of New Guinea hibiscus showered their red blossoms at our feet. Orange and lemon trees filled the air with the delightful odours of the south of Spain. Cingalese bamboo thickets, interwoven with a thick undergrowth of fan-palms, and over-topped by date and even cocoanut trees, bordered patches of Javanese paddy and Alpine barley and wheat. South Sea bananas, Syrian figs, golden Queensland paw-paws (apples), grew in profusion everywhere. Surely a more wonderful mixture of flora is scarcely to be found on any other single spot . . . the grains of the grey North close hedged by the lustrous fruits of the Tropics."

## CHAPTER V

### TOUGGOURT

*January 14-17, 1920.*

**T**HIS tour was unique.

The road from Biskra to Touggourt had once been as good as any of the other roads through the desert, until a single line of railway was made through the sandy waste. This made it less imperative to keep the road in good order, and finally in 1914, when the war came, the French had neither men, nor time, nor money to give to the care of a road which was not a necessity. So in parts this one became sand-swamped and impassable, and we learned that if we wanted to visit Touggourt we must go by the railway. As no train was going on the day on which we wanted to start, a spirited arrangement was made that one passenger "coach" should be attached to the end of a military train which was going down with goods to Touggourt, and thus we should get

over the difficulty. So the three travellers, after a day or two at Biskra, started forth in the most leisurely train in which they had ever found themselves.

The desert produces a wonderful calm over the spirit. Time becomes too dignified an abstraction to be chopped up into mere hours and minutes, and the train fell in with the general feeling, as it bore us along from oasis to oasis. When we had gone some little way we saw a very good example of a mirage, the appearance of a lake where no lake was, with some rugged dark rocks on its nearer shore, and some more coming out of the water, and later on we had the great good fortune to see the actual lake in its reality, of which we had seen the mysterious reflection fifty kilometres further back.

The journey, slow as it was, had a fascination of its own, and we saw palm-growing at its best. In this part of the country the French are bringing scientific knowledge to bear upon the culture of the date-palm. Underground reservoirs are reached by deep borings of artesian wells, and so water is provided, for the palm requires nothing but light and warmth,

a sandy soil, and a certain amount of water. The Arab saying is that the palm must have "its feet in the water and its head in the fires of Heaven." Given these conditions the date-palm yields its fruit for nearly a hundred years. The average height is between thirty and forty feet; the great fan-shaped leaves that are taken off every year from below are used as fencing (matting can be made from them also), and, as we saw in the native villages at El Kantara, the beams of the houses and wooden doors, besides the odds and ends of house carpentry, were all of the stem or the roots of the date-palm—rope was made of its fibres, every square inch being of use, till finally the desert man warms himself and cooks his food over its expiring ashes.

The arrival of the train at a station was an event of thrilling interest to the inhabitants of each oasis village, and the groups that gathered round the carriage were of great interest to us—there were many more black faces than we had seen yet.

And at length we arrived at Touggourt. The sand here is very soft and powdery, and there is no cart-road, but tram-lines are laid down,

and a quaint little covered tram drawn by one mule was waiting for us. There was a great crowd to meet this train, and a large number were negroes. The mule brought us up in fine style to the town, which stands high, about a quarter of a mile away. Behind us was a dray, also on the tram-lines, but drawn by three mules. The luggage was piled up on it, the guide, and a good portion of the crowd, seemed to get on to it too on one pretext or another, till, looking back, it had the appearance of a super-jaunting-car, for the legs of the passengers were hanging over the sides, and the luggage was piled up in the middle.

So we had a glorious arrival in the city of Touggourt, and stopped opposite the Hôtel Oued R'hir. The general impression was of a white city, with white-robed crowds, and streets deep in sand. Getting out of our tram we went under a particularly untidy archway, which seemed to serve as a kind of coach-house, and then we found ourselves in a courtyard, where there were rabbits, cats, dogs, cocks, hens and pigeons, a palm tree growing in one corner, and linen garments fluttering on a clothes-line.

We went up some stone steps which brought us on to a broad balcony, on to which the doors of our bedrooms opened—only a bed, a table, a chair and a few hooks in each—and A.'s and mine looked into the courtyard, with all its variety.

We were fascinated by the town, and were informed that there was going to be an important market on the following day, and crowds were coming from different directions with their wares, and sitting in groups about the market-place. It was getting dark, the sun had set in great glory, and in the market many fires had been lit, which flared garishly in the half-light ; little make-shift stoves had bread and cakes on them in the making, and, as we went on through the town, we saw through the branches of some palm trees what looked like a great fire, but it was the afterglow in the west of deep shining red, over the wide spaces of limitless desert.

As we stood and watched we saw the silhouette of a camel against the light, quite motionless, then another came into the picture, and it was very striking. Soon the effect passed, and we noticed that many traders had arrived with their camels on this spot, and

more were coming, and men and camels would spend the night here under the stars ready for the market on the morrow. Meanwhile the bakers of the market-place were providing good bread, cakes, and provisions for the travellers to the "sand-locked city."

Next morning the market-place was very lively, and the fresh black complexion of so many, and their flashing teeth, looked splendid with their white *burnouses*; but in Touggourt more than in any place that we have visited yet, the eyes of the children and many of their elders, too, are in a deplorable state—flies closing up the babies' eyes—it really seemed as if one in every four or five had some defect of eyesight. I believe they say, "Allah sends the flies, so it is not for us to send them away!"

As we walked about Touggourt we thought how the living pictures and scenes which were delighting us were replicas of scenes which had delighted travellers in past centuries. We continually felt that this life belonged to no century in particular, while we passed down the native streets glancing into the little dens where the Arabs were fashioning rough metal work, or roughly painting coloured leather, or

making earthenware pots, or putting an edge on a useful-looking dagger, or grinding the blade of a household knife and fixing it to its handle with neatly-plaited wire.

In another den we watched a jeweller putting together a very effective pendant of pearls and emeralds set in gold. It was a fine specimen of native work, and the designer sat on his mud floor, holding in his hand the top of the ornament, while strewed about on the ground were delicate little pendant chains, set also with pearls and emeralds. His tools were all over the floor, too, quite untidily, but with accuracy and deftness he fitted the little chains, one by one, to hang from the jewel as we watched.

One thing suddenly brings us back with a jump to the present day, and that is the hum of a Singer's sewing-machine, beloved of the Arabs, who sit in the street, outside their doors, working the treadles.

We visited the mosque, which is a fine building, containing some wonderful Arab decoration of the ninth century in white plaster. The designs are strictly geometrical, for the Prophet allowed none of his followers to make use of natural objects in art. But this stucco-

work is so light and lacy that it looks as if it had hardly been touched by the hand of man, and yet the cupola, ornamented by this intricate tracery (reminding one of snow crystals), is in as perfect condition as the day it was finished, more than a thousand years ago.

The Arabs were then at the zenith of their Golden Age, while Europe, as a whole, was in her dark ages, groping towards the light. The very word zenith is of Arab origin, with many other astronomical and scientific terms. Their figures were adopted universally as being less elaborate than the Roman numerals. With their treasured stores of ancient knowledge and learning they had given an impetus to the intellectual progress of the world—in literature, art and science; how is it, then, that in these matters, at any rate, they have settled down to an apparent state of stagnation?

In the afternoon we had a wonderful drive through sand to a town called Temacin. Our sand-cart had slight wheels with very broad tyres, and was drawn by three mules—two big ones and a little one in the centre, which pulled splendidly. The “boots” of the hotel—Ahmed by name—insisted on coming too,

running alongside with an African greyhound, a sloughi dog, on a lead.

It was a very hot afternoon, and we drove for a mile and a half through the oasis, amongst beautifully-cultured palms, and then we got out into the desert, on one of the seven great caravan routes across Sahara.

The route was very wide and trodden with the heart-shaped pad of many camels, and we saw them coming up from the south, laden with goods of every description. The merchants travel together for security, and sometimes in bands of very large numbers, but this afternoon we only met small caravans at intervals. The camels generally follow each other in single file on their long journeys, the leader being tricked out smartly in colours, with bells on his trappings, and the progress of the caravan is about twenty-four miles a day. The journey to Timbuctoo, for instance, would take five months, though General Nivelle talks of flying there in four days from Algiers.

The camel plods through his life in a dignified way which never varies. He lives from forty to fifty years, and a baby camel is only four years old when he is trained for his life work



NATIVES NEAR ZAOUIA



of burden-bearer. He is taught to kneel down and to get up at the word of his master, and when he kneels the knee halter is slipped round the doubled-up limb to prevent him stirring. His education begins with light burdens, but the weight is increased year by year, and when he attains full growth—which is when he is about seventeen or eighteen—his back is fitted for the burden of anything from between 500 to 600 lbs. in weight, roughly speaking the weight of four men.

One is told that if only a camel had more brains it would discover early that it was a powerful, savage, and wild animal, as it has all these characteristics, and never becomes attached to its master ; so we must suppose that it is only its colossal stupidity that makes it continue its education. But one cannot get over the expression of high scorn for all mankind in the way the head is set on the camel's long neck, and one sees smouldering hatred in his expression in the market-place, as burden after burden is placed on his back, and the ropes securing each are tightened, and he lifts his lip and shows his large teeth, and snarls savagely, when the last straw is in its place, and the knee-

halter released, and he must rise to his feet, and go on his way with characteristic endurance.

Our road led up and down an undulating track, with dunes on either side. The desert round about Laghouat and Ghardaia, though a solitude, wild and vast, had its waves of sand broken by thorn, or scrub, or sweet-smelling thyme in tufts, or by huge boulder stones, but here we felt "This is the Desert of our Dreams."

And on we went, Ahmed gallantly running along in the hot sun with Sahib, the sloughi dog, panting behind him. Sahib at length dragged on his chain, and refused to go a step further, so he was promptly hauled up on to the box seat, and Ahmed was cajoled (with a little *bakshish*) to return.

Our pace was not terrific—which was not to be wondered at—but eventually we got to Temacin. Here we saw a white town crowning a sandy hill, and from it rise a graceful and decorated minaret, and many of the inhabitants crowded round the little cart.

So hot was it, and so pretty was Temacin, and so enticing was the oasis, that A. and I elected to get out and spend the afternoon

there, while L. went on to a further town called Zaouia.

We sat on the sand, in the pleasant shade of many date-palms ; there was a Marabout's tomb near by, and two little Arab boys made friends with us, all of us laughing a great deal without understanding each other's language, and at three o'clock we heard the "Voice of the Minaret" calling to prayer, and we saw the flutter of the Muezzin's *burnous* on the balcony, as he gave the strange cry of "Allah-il-Allah ! "

We had a most peaceful afternoon, delighting in the shade of our oasis, and sketching the white town on the hill. At about half-past four the little cart appeared once more on the scene, and we found that L. had had many adventures, and had been entertained by the Marabout, who appears to be a ruler of Zaouia, and all the inhabitants his willing slaves. He had met a native poet and two Caïds at the feast, and had had a most interesting afternoon.

By L.

The Marabout of Zaouia is a very great man indeed, and, moreover, he is a man of great charm. He was so kind as to take me

into the mosque to see the fine tomb of his father, for whom he appeared to have great respect. This he was able to do from his position as Marabout, and I did not even have to "take off my shoes from off my feet." He also assembled the chief notabilities of Zaouia to meet me, among them being a poet, evidently the Court Poet, for the Marabout is quite a king in his own domain.

He and his Court gave me a most cordial farewell on my departure.

*(Continued.)*

Once more settled in our places in the little sand-cart, we were prepared to go straight back to Touggourt, when the driver said, "All strangers must visit the Caïd before leaving Temacin!" We demurred, but the driver added, "He expects it; he has given orders that all visitors must see him!" But the sun was sinking lower in the heavens, and we had a good stretch of caravan route before we got back to Touggourt, so, notwithstanding the pressing general invitation to all tourists, we hardened our hearts, and paid no visit to the Caïd of Temacin.

There were the same desert scenes on our way back as we had seen coming, with the background of an African afterglow. The attraction to the traveller when the desert is a new experience, is the constant sense of wonder. "What is the colour of the long stretches of desert sand? Is it cream? buff? pink? tawny? red?—is the colour warm or cold?" To-night parts look grey, parts a warmer brown, the clear, bright evening sky changing all the effects as we went along.

Then, as we passed more camels, our thoughts flew off to wondering about their long journeys. We had heard of the native tribe of "Tuaregs" who had come in bands on fleet *meharis* (racing camels), and how they are able to overtake the beasts of burden, pillage, and get away again when they have got all they want.

Then the ripples on the hillocks near the road made us think of the desert winds, and away flew our thoughts again to sandstorms. The camels kneel down spontaneously when the storm comes, bowing their heads to the gale, and stretching out their long necks, shutting their eyes and closing their nostrils

tightly, waiting "until the tyranny be over-past" with dogged patience. Then the sand whirls forward and makes hills and hollows where none have been before, changing the face of the surface landscape and all its landmarks.

Next morning we watched the camels drinking, and I fear laundry work was being done at the same long stone trough. But before going out, our good landlady, having noticed that L. had a gun, humbly approached him, with the request that he would shoot one of her pigeons for her, for our dinner. "You see those on the roof? Not the first, nor the second, but the white one, the third." So there was great excitement, and everybody within hail came on the balcony to see the tragic deed done. Lekna the black boy, Ahmed the Arab, and sundry others watched breathlessly. "Bang!" and the little victim disappeared into the courtyard to save our feelings; and, oh! I grieve to admit that at dinner she was the glory of our feast, and I may add that never was there a tenderer little turtledove.

L. bought a thick rug of fine design and

beautiful colour made in one of the cities near, and then we went again into the market and bought a bag of roast pea-nuts, among other things, and at the corner of one of the streets we stopped to look at the professional story-teller, and his audience round him, the children in the front row, and their elders behind. He was seated on the ground, with his back against the wall, droning away in a sing-song voice, and telling his story with very little expression and no gesticulations. His companion occasionally accompanied him feebly on a little instrument with two wire strings. The people, and even the children, were listening with rapt attention ; sometimes his friend joined in and it became a duologue, but one longed to get a clue as to what it was all about.

We had settled to go to the mosque about sunset, and climb the tower and have a broad view of the white town and its sandy surroundings. But the cavalier of the Caïd arrived with a message, inviting us to come and have tea with himself and his brother, and the cavalier would be our guide. We had to accept, and set forth uphill towards the mosque, through

white streets arched over our heads and deep in sand.

The Caïd of Touggourt had a fine presence, large spectacles, and an important turban. His brother was a Caïd too, of a town half-way between Ghardaia and Touggourt, called Guerrara, and he had a beautiful *caftan* of pink embroidered silk, and a charming manner.

The tea was amusing, and we found the Caïd of Guerrara illuminative on the subject of artesian wells and subterranean rivers, and ready to tell us everything about the latest methods of palm culture, their improvement being a work of great importance. During ten years the population of the oasis villages in Algeria rose from 6,600 to 13,000, owing to the judicious sinking of artesian wells, which render habitable extensive desert tracts—now groves of palm trees.

When the feast was over we bowed ourselves out, and walked down the hill in the twilight under the arches connecting the walls on either side; the arches stood out snow-white against the deepening sky, and the shadows were pure blue.

This evening I opened my door on to the

balcony in order to hear more clearly some singing which had been going on for some time in a mosque near by. This was the phrase that was being sung over and over again—



the first note of each bar accented with decision. It was sung by men's voices, in unison, and sounded rather like a Gregorian chant.

I find it difficult to catch hold of the typical Arab music, for to our ears the melodies are anything but simple. There are all sorts of little extra notes and twittering trills. The distant strains of music accompanying the African dances of the Ouled Nails we have very often heard from afar, and to European ears they have a truly barbaric sound. In the market-places one hears snatches of music, sweet in tone, but sometimes making one think of the whistling of the wind through a keyhole, and when flutes and hautboys are accompanied by a drum one hears little besides the accompaniment. Occasionally we have thought the music reminiscent of the bagpipes.

At Laghouat the Pashada's band had shrill reed instruments and several drums, and the music played was full of the same twittering and inconsequent little jerks and trills ; but I have not heard sufficient Arab music to get more than the vaguest impression of it, beyond that of an underlying melancholy, a minor note sounding through all the cadences. None of it seemed to me joyous, notwithstanding the trills.

Next morning we said good-bye to Touggourt early, for our train was to start at seven, and although we were ready at half-past six, there was no sign of the little train appearing, and the awful prospect of the goods-train departing without us made Jules charter a crowd of Arabs to take our luggage by hand to the station. With the early morning light, the deep sand, and our familiar suit-cases and bags figuring in such an odd picture, this procession was delightful. A. and I stalked on ahead, and one Arab carried a gun, and another a luncheon-basket, another the cartridge-case ; Lekna, the black boy, our bags ; Ahmed, a canvas sack ; and L.'s fur rug was worn, *burnous*-like, by a tall Arab, who felt the morning air chilly. And

presently, and solemnly, we all arrived at the station, to find once more that time is a detail in the desert, and there was a difference of nearly an hour between town time and station time.

If our outward journey was slow, what was the journey back? But then, if travellers insist on going by goods-train they must smile at delays. And we did smile. We waved at groups outside their black Arab tents, and one mother, near the railway line, with a good deal of yellow and red in her dress, came quite close with her baby. Then, when we were waiting at a station, a crowd, increasing in size as the minutes went by, stared at us with profound interest, and looked expectant, as if something ought to be happening; so we bethought us of the roasted pea-nuts bought at Touggourt, and began throwing them out of the window for the children to catch. The Arab men thought this a delightful game also, and began joining in, and presently one of them produced a date or two, and threw them up to the carriage for A. and me to catch, and we answered back with pea-nuts, whereupon our nice Arab disappeared

for a time, and came back with a package of dates which he gave us as a present.

Then our train moved on, amidst great wavings of farewell, and at the next station we watched a stately procession of camels pass by, evidently an important Sheikh moving with all his family. The camels went in single file with a leisurely dignity, many Arabs perched high on the backs of endless camels one after another. Others were mounted on fine Arab horses, caparisoned gaily, and going at a foot's pace.

The *bassours* of the ladies' camels were draped brilliantly, like those which we saw at Laghouat, and, with the desert background and atmosphere, the picture will remain in our memories.

After a while, our gently-moving steam-engine proceeded on its way, giving us a second view of the procession, which gladdened our hearts as a typical desert scene. We can only hope that none of the mounted Arabs, swaying with the movements of their camels, lifted their eyes in the direction of our train, and looked upon us as a blot upon their landscape, a jarring note in their desert silences.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE TIMGAD TOUR

*January 19-22, 1920*

WE left Biskra on January 19, a lovely warm day, and we sped across the desert to El Kantara, and, after luncheon, went on and on towards Batna, our objective being Timgad, a town of ancient days, now the Pompeii of North Africa, once the southern outpost of the Roman Empire.

For twelve centuries Timgad lay buried and forgotten. The top of a triumphal arch, erected in honour of the Emperor Trajan, was all that appeared above ground to give a hint of what might lie below, till, late in the nineteenth century, excavations were begun which promised well, and now, as an expert archæologist (M. Albert Ballu) puts it: "Nulle part sauf à Pompeii, on n'a trouvé l'équivalent de ce que nous donne Timgad, c'est à dire, un ensemble complet, une ville toute entière, qui semble

n'être morte que d'hier, et qui sourit à la résurrection ensoleillée, de ses rues, de ses carrefours, de ses monuments. . . ." So we expected great things.

As we drove towards Batna, we saw a group of Arab horses standing by a well, riderless, just a glimpse of bright colour—saddles green and red, with gay saddle-cloths ; but on the other side of the well was a striking picture. About a dozen Arabs in showy *burnouses* were kneeling in a row, side by side—for it was three o'clock—and one in front, possibly a Marabout, was apparently leading the devotions. A picturesque group, and most impressive.

Batna is dull—at least so it seemed to us—a French military town with a strong garrison ; and, after we left it behind, we began to see traces of the ancient Romans, and soon came to Lambessa, a ruined town, once the general headquarters of the Third Roman Legion. The *Prætorium* stands, as it stood in long-ago days, four-square in the centre of the camp, perfect to all appearance, albeit now only an empty shell. Each of its four sides has three fine arches and niches for statues, and it is two-storied.



THE PRÆTORIUM AT LAMBESSA



TIMGAD; PART OF THE FORUM



We motored on, thinking of the scope and strength of the Roman occupation, which erected these massive buildings almost on the borders of the desert, and, as time went on, the sky became lovely with sunset colours : the west orange, and the sun a globe of fire sinking behind the distant hills. From this burning centre drifted upwards clouds of gold and red flame, stretching out restlessly in all directions, a perfect glory of colour, increasing in intensity every minute. Overhead the pale green sky was deepening into blue, with larger, pinker clouds, and then, gradually, the sun set, and the glory began to fade, the hills of the west rising purple and dark against the brightness of the afterglow, while the mountains opposite stood out bright blue, through stages of varying effect, till all was grey, and twilight fell as we arrived at Timgad. The sunset seemed to colour our thoughts of Rome and her end.

We walked at once into the city, through the remains of an ancient gateway, up the *Cardo Maximus*, with its huge, blue paving-stones set diagonally, and columns, which were all that remained of ancient porticoes, flanking it on

either side. On our left we passed a wide flight of stone steps, leading to what we afterwards learnt was the town library, and walking on, we came to the steps of the Forum.

We had a general impression of stateliness and space, and in the dusk the town looked ghostly. As we explored the ancient theatre, it was too dark to distinguish much beyond its semicircular form.

We recrossed the Forum, and turned west down another flagged street, paved diagonally like the *Cardo* (a word which implies a road running north and south), and arrived at Trajan's Triumphal Arch as the stars were coming out. Standing beneath it, we heard a movement overhead, as a heavy bird shook itself, annoyed at our presence, and disappeared, whirring low over the silent city.

Next morning was sunny, and the first thing that struck us was the freshness of Timgad's stones and pavements. We were taken for a walk through the town by the director of the excavations—a Frenchman, enthusiastic about his work, who mentally sees the city as she was in her zenith, and to whom it is an evident pleasure to make her live once more.

Of course it suggests Pompeii, but the streets are wider—the streets of a business town rather than those of a pleasure city. To-day they were shining, and we saw on them the marks of Roman chariot-wheels, and flag-stones worn by footsteps of 1800 years ago.

Monsieur le Directeur took us to the library, which was built "as an offering to his native town" (so runs the inscription) by one Rogatianus. He was the local Andrew Carnegie, though it was not built till after his death.

The point about this particular library is that, although on numerous inscriptions in various Roman towns there have been references to public libraries, this one at Timgad is the only one that has, as yet, been unearthed.

It is about eighty feet square, with a **U**-shaped end where six pillars stand in a semi-circle which once upheld a vaulted dome. Several of the pillars down the length of the building are now in their places, capitals and all; but when found they were all horizontal.

Then we looked with great interest at the places where the niches once were which held the "books," that is to say, the cylindrical metal cases containing the papyrus rolls, which

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were placed, one on top of another, in an orderly manner, according to subject. And from this spot it was amusing to glance back at the six perfect pillars at the entrance, and imagine the intellectuals of Timgad coming up the steps and crossing the central pavement, making with serious intent for one particular niche, and one particular cylinder, then each sinking down on one of the lounges at the side to read his roll in comfort.

We soon realised, from the conversation of Monsieur le Directeur, that Timgad had once been a town of great importance. Built in the reign of Trajan, about thirty years after the destruction of Jerusalem, she soon rose to great power during the reigns of the progressive emperors, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius, who all encouraged everything possible in the way of commerce and agriculture, no less than of art, science, and literature.

During the second, third, and part of the fourth century of our era, Timgad flourished and abounded. Her suburbs (remains of which are still seen) stretched far beyond the limits of the town, and beyond them, again,

villas, farms, and homesteads, the surrounding country being covered with cereals and groves of olive trees. A fine supply of fresh water was brought from the mountains by an aqueduct, Timgad being built on one of the last spurs of the Aurès range. The Berbers, even, notwithstanding their attitude of dislike towards all their conquerors, found that such a flourishing town in their midst was a distinct advantage, and when its presence became an established fact, they came down from their mountain fastnesses and up from the desert, and did business readily in her markets and her shops.

Before the fourth century, however, the great stability of the Roman Empire had given way, and it began to break up from within, the result of many causes well known to history. It had no longer the force of a united purpose, and presently this was felt in all the frontier towns, and, with the rest, Timgad became the prey of divided counsels and conflicting interests for nearly a hundred years.

The Berbers, of course, were only waiting their opportunity to strike, and strike hard, and they began by pillaging and harassing the

suburbs, and at every opportunity sowing dissension ; and then the Vandals, who had been steadily working eastward in their mighty sweep across North Africa, finished the work and occupied the town for a certain time. Very little detail is known of the Vandal occupation, but many palaces were burned, and the town sacked.

And now comes a curious interlude, which adds to the romance of Timgad's story. Solomon, who was the son and successor of the great Byzantine warrior Belisarius, made an expedition in hopes of saving Timgad. His father had succeeded in holding the Vandals in check and he was bent on a similar mission, but, alas ! he arrived too late, the Vandals had done their work ; the city was deserted, and the Berbers were camping among the ruins.

But the Byzantines, nevertheless, were evidently of opinion that their lines had fallen in very pleasant places, and having come, they determined to stay, and so, beside the Pagan ruins arose the Christian city, the builders of the latter using Timgad's pillars, architraves, and stones, and finding her a most convenient quarry.

Monasteries, baptisteries, and basilicas were built, as well as a great fort to protect the new city, and so it flourished until the great Arab invasion, under Sidi Okbar, warrior and reputed saint, who claimed the whole of North Africa, from end to end, in the name of the Prophet Mahomet, towards the end of the seventh century. Nothing stood against this invasion, and in due time Timgad and the Byzantine city lay stark and deserted, a dwelling-place for the wild beasts of the mountains and the desert.

Even they, I should think, deserted her when an earthquake came and worked further havoc, cutting off the western portion of the town. And then kind Mother Earth took pity on her, and the floods of winter brought down the light soil from the mountains, and the sand of the desert helped in the work, and thus Timgad was laid to rest, the heavy pall growing denser and denser with each succeeding century, till her name, her history, and all remembrance of her was blotted out.

Strange to say, only one classical writer, Procopus, mentions her, and he deals chiefly with her condition when ravaged by the Vandals and the Berbers, and mentions how the latter

were living in their tents among the ruins before the coming of the Byzantines. The remainder of her history is revealed by her own stones, with their many clear-cut inscriptions, the account of the discovery of which is given in a charming little brochure by Albert Ballu, a former Director of Excavations.

Standing in the Forum in the morning sunshine and overlooking the city, we got an idea of what Timgad had looked like in her prime, and this was helped by the presence of M. le Directeur, who mentally sees her with all her walls and roofs intact. A great many pillars are in their old places, and, with regard to those that are missing, one sees on the pavement, clearly drawn out, the square where the base rested, sharp as when first cut.

Here in the Forum, the inhabitants of the city met and talked, for, besides its official uses, it formed a recognised promenade for the society of the town, and touched the life of the city at every point. Here was the rostrum, where the orators stood, making their speeches, delivering official communications or declaiming funeral elegies, and the marks of the metal balustrade

in front, which once was there, are still to be seen. I am sure it was often clutched, and leaned upon, and pounded by the orators in the fire of their eloquence.

The Forum was the place of the "Exchange," as well as of the Courts of Justice. On one side the merchants discussed commerce and finance, while on the other the judges gave sentence. At the end we were pointed out the site of a Roman primary school, and near by were remains of many shops, with back-doors; while the centre was adorned with statues of deities and emperors, and also with portrait busts of the local celebrities, famous perhaps for heroism, or wealth, or position; and many of these statues, more or less broken, are on view to-day, outside the museum.

Other great meeting-places in Timgad were the various large establishments of public baths, thirteen of which have already been discovered, in addition to sets of bath-rooms in all private houses. The baths were, to all intents and purposes, clubs, as well as places of entertainment, where concerts, singing, acting and recitations took place. From the fine mosaics on the floor, they must have been very well decorated

and furnished in all that was considered the best style of the period.

Here flocked philosophers and poets, men of letters and orators, and there are traces of reading-rooms, as well as of a gymnasium and hall of exercise ; barbers and masseurs were in attendance ; there were cold baths, hot baths, tepid baths and vapour baths, and we saw the stoves which the slaves had to keep going at a terrible heat, with only tiny apertures above for air. The whole underground apparatus for the graded distribution of heat in the different rooms is in perfect order to this day, stoves and all, so that the ancestry of the Turkish bath is not difficult to trace.

One of these great establishments of public baths was given to the town by a private individual, who had evidently the strongest affection for his birthplace. He was a soldier, rejoicing in the name of MARCUS PLOTIUS FAUSTUS SERTIUS, described on an inscription in his market-place as being “a Roman Knight, and ancient chief of the Cohorts and Wings of the Auxiliary Army.”

Marcus had a lovely wife, whose statue now graces the walls of the museum ; her name was



TIMGAD ; DECORATED STONE IN MARKET-PLACE OF SERTIUS



TIMGAD ; STATUE OF VALENTINA ON WALL OF MUSEUM



CORNELIA VALENTINA, and they lived in the third century, while Timgad was still in her prime, without a cloud on her horizon.

One of the most interesting spots in the town is the market-place of Sertius, another munificent gift of this good citizen. It stands close to his public baths, and not very far from his private house, with the crowning height of the Capitol behind, whose two great pillars, seventy feet high, dominate the city. This market-place is spacious, and in the centre of its courtyard there used to be a fountain. It was colonnaded all round, with splendid arches, one of which remains, propped up against a wall, built of great stones, cut smooth and so beautifully fitted into each other that no cement is needed to uphold the arch, the stones being in perfect poise.

As we were admiring the pillars running down one side of the quadrangle, one of us asked M. le Directeur if there were no chance of still finding the missing pillars and restoring them to their places.

“Oh, we know where they are, quite well,” he said, pointing in the direction of the largest of the Byzantine churches, “the missing pillars

of the market-place adorn the nave of that basilica." "But surely they will be replaced here in course of time?" we ventured to suggest. "Most certainly *not!*!" was his emphatic reply; "the immense interest to historians and archæologists lies in the fact of the Byzantines having made free use of the Timgad ruins when building their new town towards the end of the sixth century." "And how long did the Byzantine city exist?" we asked. "For a hundred years," he answered; "a hundred years of peace and quiet, and then came the great Arab invasion, and all was over." Then we were shown the stone on which is engraved the inscription recording the generosity of Sertius, and, at the semicircular end of the market-place, he pointed out to us seven shops in perfect order, which, if roofed, could be used to-day.

The work of excavation revealed the nature of the shops. All sorts of quaint haberdashery was found beneath one; another was evidently a toy-shop, and we saw the little toys in the museum. The entrance to each was barred by a large limestone slab, a fixture, about a yard from the ground, which formed the counter,

and the shopkeepers had to slip in underneath this, and come up smiling behind, ready to serve all comers, and lay out specimens of their merchandise on show.

We had become so accustomed to the tiny shops of the Arabs, that we could quite imagine how these would look, crammed with goods, when the selling was in full swing.

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But it was not only Marcus Sertius whose name was honoured in Timgad. The beautiful Valentina also made a generous gift to the beloved city in presenting to the citizens the Forum Vestiarum, the market-place of clothes.

One afternoon I was drawing some details of carving in Valentina's market-place, and was wondering how it looked when she first saw it completed according to plan, and what she felt when she read the inscription on the stone which immortalises her name.

It was a roofed market-place, for we saw the tiles scattered about between the pavement stones (as, indeed, one sees the red pieces of tile in all the buildings we visited), and the middle of the courtyard was paved in alternate colours. That was surely Valentina's idea.

I could see Valentina and her attendant coming up the six steps, when the business of buying and selling was very intense, and delighting in the success of the venture. What clothes were laid out for sale? Purple, fine linen, embroideries, beautiful colours, no doubt; peplums, pallia, stoles, tunics, outer garments, under garments, Valentina looked at them all.

She had great taste with regard to her own clothes, and the graceful drapery of her flowing robe is unusually attractive in her statue, her hair being divided in the centre, and rather full at the sides, and she must have felt a flutter of excitement at having carried through the idea, and given to the town something so beautiful and useful. The Romans knew all about pins and needles, buttons and thimbles, very like what we have to-day, although the only needles which have survived the overthrow of this city were wooden ones with square eyes.

I think Valentina would pass along, through her own market-place, and visit that of Sertius, going perhaps to one of the seven shops on her way home to buy safety-pins or hairpins such as we saw at the museum. Perhaps she looked in at the jeweller's shop, or the toy-shop, or

the baker's, till her attendants, glancing at the semicircular sundial, warned her that the shadows were lengthening, and that it was time to go home.

The *Cardo Maximus* runs straight up a slight incline till it gets to the *Forum*, and, on the other side of the *Forum*, is again continued, under the name of the *Cardo Sud*, and this was—shall we say?—the *Grosvenor Square* of *Timgad*, *Valentina* and her husband living in a large corner house.

Now these houses were, of course, built for hot weather, with inside courts, and very few windows opening on to the main streets. The plain outside walls had often shops built up against them, where oil, wine and provisions of all sorts were sold. *Sertius*, for instance, had probably a farm in the country, where these commodities were produced, which would be brought daily into the city, and displayed in a shop against the front wall of his house. There were two, in fact, one on either side of his "hall-door," and these had back-doors communicating with the house itself.

The entrance was imposing. Three pillars remain of a handsome portico ; the attendant

would swing open the “Janua”—the hall-door (we saw the marks of its hinges), and Valentina would find herself in a hall, with doors on all four sides. The attendant would disappear through the left-hand door into the servants’ quarters, which also led down four or five steps to the private bath-rooms.

Valentina, meanwhile, opens the door opposite (*i.e.* the Ostium), and comes into the Atrium, which has an unusually long and narrow stone tank, running the whole length of the courtyard and open to the heavens above. Under the arches round the courtyard were once sofas and lounges, and above a loggia with a second story, but of all this nothing remains now except the tank and a few pillars!

Valentina goes on, and enters the Tablinium, corresponding to our dining-room, and pauses for a moment to admire the beautiful mosaic floor which has lately been put in. Now it adorns one of the walls in the museum, an intricate and handsome design, carried out in the natural stones of the country, which have a wonderful range of colour—a particularly fine example of mosaic art.

Now she opens the door to the right, and

find herself in the Triclinium, the master's study, where Sertius is seated at a low table, stylus in hand, and he pauses to tell her of some new scheme he is contemplating for the benefit of the town and of their fellow-citizens. Round the walls are probably niches for statues, and under their feet a mosaic pavement. Everything is orderly and refined. Beyond the Triclinium is another inner courtyard, with a fountain and a fish-pond in the centre, and arcades supporting a loggia and upper story, but only the "ground-plan" remains.

Sertius and Valentina died before any cloud disturbed their serenity, threatening serious disorders and coming terrors and disasters to their city. Everything seemed secure enough in their day, for it was some time before the frontiers were affected by the disintegration at Rome. They were good citizens, who worked for the benefit of the community, not only in generous intention, but also in gracious contributions.

Strange to say, no cemeteries have as yet been unearthed, but these will yield additional knowledge of the history of the town when they

are discovered, for the Roman law recognised that every individual, slave as well as citizen, had a right to reverent cremation, and the ashes were preserved in cinerary urns.

It is possible that a monument may have been erected in memory of two such prominent citizens as Sertius and Valentina, benefactors to the town, and this may yet be discovered.

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Between two of the pillars in the Forum is engraved upon one of the paving-stones the following arresting inscription :

“ TO HUNT . . . TO BATHE  
TO PLAY . . . TO LAUGH  
THAT IS . . . TO LIVE.”

Was this simply a cheerful motto for the children’s playground, for the adjoining stone was scored with little hollows for some childish game of marbles ; or was it, perhaps, Timgad’s lax ideal of life during the time of decadence and decline ?

If this was the case, her subsequent history forms a tragic comment on the light words.

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We waved a last good-bye to the city, as the



STORK'S NEST ON THE TOP OF THE STEEPLE



DOUGGA. THE ROMAN THEATRE



motor set forth on its way to Constantine, the two great pillars of the Capitol being our last impression of Timgad, where we almost felt we had left two friends behind us—Marcus Sertius and Valentina.

## CHAPTER VII

CONSTANTINE AND HAMMAM MESKOUTINE

*January 22-27, 1920*

FROM Timgad we went to Constantine, the ancient city of Cirta, whose history carries us "down the dark backward and abysm of Time" through countless generations of humanity. It is obvious from her position, that the site must have been used early in the history of mankind as a city of refuge, for Constantine stands proudly on one of the world's natural fortresses. The river Rhum-mel flows a thousand feet below, through what appears to be a stupendous moat, encircling nearly three sides of the city. Early in the history of our planet, some convulsion of Nature must have cut this clean and narrow dyke through the solid rock, and thus created the famous Gorge of Constantine.

The effect is awe-inspiring, and the spirit is burdened with a sense of the magnitude of the

proportions as we gaze at the very roots of the rocks—supporting layers of strata—a sheer perpendicular precipice of 1000 feet on either side of the river, like a solid wall of giant masonry. Out of the precipice facing the rock on which the city stands, the French have cut a path, in order to make it possible to walk through the gorge from end to end, and this path is protected by a substantial hand-rail, but at some places it is only a wooden platform supported on iron girders fixed into the massive rock.

Constantine boasts of having withstood more than eighty sieges, many of which are matters of history before the Christian era.

Jugurtha, the King of Numidia, in the second century before Christ, has been made famous in the annals of the historian Sallust. Many of his wars centred round Cirta, and several of the memorable events connected with them took place in the ancient city, towering on its detached and unique site.

The name of Constantine replaced the older name in the fourth century, when, after having been reduced to ashes, the city was rebuilt by the Romans, and her strong position enabled

her to withstand the assaults of the Vandal and the Byzantine hosts. But in 710 she was conquered by the Arabs, who held her for more than 800 years.

Then came the Turkish era in 1535, and among many other places of interest we visited the palace of the last Bey of Constantine, Ahmed Bey, who, I am delighted to say, was turned out by the French in the year 1837. In his person and character one is able to get a flashlight glimpse of the infamous power of the Turk in Algeria.

It is hard to believe the depth of degradation and cruelty that had existed within a hundred years of the present day, and although, on the morning we saw it, the palace of the Bey was sunny and attractive, with its quadrangular and arcaded *patios*, its orange trees, lemon trees, and pretty gardens in the centre, the wraiths of many wretched women must haunt the place, and the ghosts of the poor blinded musicians who played for them while they danced for the pleasure of the Bey.

The porter, who lives at the gate, showed us what he could of the palace, and his stories of the state in which the French found it in

1837 made one rejoice at the downfall of the Turk.

Certainly one of the chief interests in the town is the human one. Going out at ten o'clock in the morning into the sunny Place du Palais, the groups of living pictures were worth coming all the way to see. The Arabs, the types of whom we are getting to know so well, the desert men, the mountain men, the town men, the poor men, the rich men, were largely represented, with an admixture of Turks, which, to me, were less familiar.

The Turkish turbans did not look as patriarchal as those of our Arab friends, but their baggy trousers, embroidered vests and bright leggings and shoes made a fine variety; and the Zouaves passing to and fro introduced nice patches of red and blue. The whole impression was one of movement, colour and glitter, for the women seemed to have put on all the jewellery of which they were possessed.

We saw working girls with gold coins adorning their hair, huge circular ear-rings, and gaily coloured scarves, children with chains and bangles, bright yellows and reds, passing in and out of the busy crowd. Here, laughing

negroes, and there evident sons of Abraham, in great numbers, meeting and greeting in the sunshine, the Jewesses veiling the lower part of their faces, but showing glittering embroideries adorning their dresses and a good deal of colour, an embroidered handkerchief festooned about their hair, and a jaunty little conical cap sometimes set at an angle with a bright scarf swathed round it. The Jewish children wore these conical caps too.

The Moorish women were more sombre than any we had seen yet, wearing grey cloaks, which made them look like Sisters of Charity, their nose and mouth being covered with a white muslin band.

Besides these were Europeans of every nation, the French predominating, of course. The population is exactly half-and-half, 30,000 Natives and 30,000 Europeans, and it is the variety of the passers-by in squares and streets that strikes the passing stranger as being the crowning interest of the City of Constantine.

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We left Constantine on Saturday, January 24, and came to Hammam Meskoutine, the latter part of the drive being through beautiful

mountain scenery. And here, forming another variety and surprise for the travellers, were Geysers and Hot Springs.

As we drove up to the hotel we saw a cloud of steam and smoke coming up from the depths of the earth, and before dark we went to explore.

The vegetation here is rich, because the roots of the trees evidently like the hot damp earth, and little rills were always surprising us, bubbling up at our feet and running down the hill. It is sulphur water, and the smaller the rill, the lower the temperature ; the larger the stream, the nearer it comes to boiling point. The Arabs boil their eggs in the running streams, and cook their vegetables ; and from Roman times onwards, the medicinal properties of the Thermal Springs have been known, and yet the name of Hammam Meskoutine has been given to the spot, which means, in English, the Accursed Baths.

The geysers in this valley play strange tricks, and when they bubble up they leave a circular sediment of carbonate of lime, which, as it cools down, appears like stone. Next time it overflows it makes another circular layer of sediment, and so on ; it builds higher and higher, until

the inner forces of the earth have no strength to force up the water beyond a certain height, so it narrows at the top as it becomes exhausted, and has formed itself into a cone, while the imprisoned water finds an outlet somewhere else.

The cones are greyish-white, and there are hundreds of them, standing in the most weird groups all over the plain, like grey ghosts, some taller, some smaller, some wider, and some flatter than others.

But the Arabs do not like them, and they will not walk about after nightfall, because of the following Arab legend :

Once upon a time Ali and Ourida were going to be married. It was an illegal marriage, and the elders of the Arab tribe besought the bridegroom to change his mind, which resulted in all the heads of the elders being cut off in front of his tent. Ali's father and mother, however, sanctioned the wedding and were at the ceremony, and the Cadi had come from a distance to marry them.

The wedding day arrived, and the tents covered the plain, for many of the guests had come from far. The bridal presents were

brought on the backs of camels, musicians had been bidden to add to the gaiety, and the fires were heated seven times so that the feast which was prepared should be of the most magnificent description.

At the height of the merriment, the curse of Allah is said to have descended upon the wedding party, and all were turned into stone.

Over the plain the wide cones are just like tents, and some even appear to have doorways, and many groups of them might stand for the guests, and many more for the musicians. And for ever the white steam ascends in great volume, blurring the middle distance, fires of the wedding feast that never will be extinguished, the Arabs even pointing out the petrified dish of *couscous*. Some of the cones are quite small (perhaps they may be considered to be the heads of the Elders of the Tribe, which the bridegroom impetuously removed in front of his tent), and some are perhaps fifteen to twenty feet high. Others have got coated with earth, blown up by the wind, and this has accumulated, and birds have dropped seeds upon them, with the result that they are draped

with a great variety of grasses and ferns, and even shrubs.

The uncovered cones look strange enough, and even in the brilliant sunshine ghostly and uncanny, with little jets of boiling water bubbling up everywhere. The finest sight, one of the most curious freaks of the hot springs, is the Petrified Cascade, over which the waters flow at almost boiling point, throwing up a volume of steam that can be seen from far.

By L.

I found that here many sportsmen were in the habit of going out after wild boar every week. They had some good dogs, which are essential for success in the sport.

We were given the opportunity of joining them, and rode up to a wood about three miles away which stands high above Hammam Meskoutine, and from which a glorious panorama is visible.

We were placed at a distance from each other, where it was possible that boar might pass.

I had an elevated position among some great

rocks, on the rim as it were of a vast amphitheatre. From where I was I looked down on to a great world of rocks and trees surrounded by higher ground.

Far away I could hear the cry of the dogs, breaking the stillness.

The cry continued, as the chase bore away now in one direction and now in another.

Finally a wild boar was slain, and though no good fortune or opportunity extended itself to Jules or me, the scene was most picturesque.

(Continued.)

With the interest of Timgad fresh in our minds, we had a lovely drive, through a country rich in vegetation, to a place called Announa, where there are the remains of a large Roman city. It gives promise of great treasures when systematically excavated, and stands on a beautiful site among the mountains. A little has already been done, and we recognised its "Cardo Maximus," and its Forum, and the walls of the city are as strong and well pointed as if built yesterday.

Presently, when they are all unearthed, each city will have its history written, and judging

from the number of inscribed stones, at which we could only glance, there are plenty of materials for history here. As at Timgad there is a Byzantine church, for Announa was a centre for early Christian work, and it is mentioned by Augustine, by the name of Tibilis, as one of the most important Roman cities in North Africa, the see of a Christian Bishop.

Historians refer to as many as 580 Christian Bishoprics in North Africa, but the early spirit of Christianity seems to have vanished, and the Church became divided into many different sects, and weakened by feverish controversies. The Donatists were militant heretics, their cause being later on espoused by the Vandals, while other varieties of heresy were warmly upheld by the natives, and made the reason for further disturbances and passionate feuds amongst the different factions.

Now Announa looks gaunt upon the sunny hill-side, but there are beautiful bits of marble lying about, and the inscriptions upon any stones that have been unearthed are very deeply cut. Across one of the streets is what must have been a great column of pink

alabaster, perhaps one of many ; it was lovely to look at, and I took back a bit of it. It is a little tantalising looking at ruins of such deep historical interest as these, without having a clue to their special significance.

Another day we had an equally interesting drive in the opposite direction to a place called Roknia, high up in the mountains. We went through beautiful scenery, and before us were grand purple mountains. Presently, we came to the top of a small plateau and walked some little way across some rough ground, when suddenly we arrived at a place of surpassing interest, a burying-ground of 4000 years ago. This consists of hundreds and hundreds of dolmens, built along the level ground and down the hill-side ; sometimes a dolmen stands apart, and sometimes they seem to be in groups of four or five together. They are very like the Cromlechs one is accustomed to see in Ireland, two big uprights with a third stone horizontally across the top, and sometimes a fourth slab which makes a back.

There was an archæologist staying at our hotel, who was out here in the interests of the British Museum, in order to study the dolmens

of Roknia, strange relics of the Stone Age, and all more or less intact. He told us that the largest were undoubtedly the oldest, and he gave their date as being 2000 years before the Christian Era. The stones are of a light limestone, and many of those on the crest of the hill were worn through on the weather side, with holes sufficiently large for one to put a hand through.

Of course, we travel back mentally through the millenniums and wonder who are these dead—who *were* the living, who grew up amongst these fine mountains, and down in the deep valley beneath, in the very dawn of civilisation—what to us seems like the beginning of time?

Our friend informed us that they have never been scientifically examined, but that it would be a work of intense archæological interest to do so. Some surface investigations had revealed an ancient bridle, and he told us that this had aroused great argument, seeing that the bridle was a Roman one! “Doubtless,” he said, “the Romans, being an intelligent people, were as much interested in these prehistoric remains as we are. They were 2000 years old in their

time, but that bridle is now at Constantine, and I am going there to investigate it ! ”

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We were very sorry to leave the verdant valley of Hammam Meskoutine, and as we drove away at seven o'clock in the morning, the steam from the geysers was carried up in a mist above the cones. Then, to our surprise, we saw, scattered about amongst the stone tents of the “Arab Marriage,” the well-known real tents of the Bedouins of dark brown camels’ hair, one of their goats being perched on the top of one of the “accursed cones” ! These Arabs were evidently disinclined to let superstition interfere with so desirable a camping-ground.

## CHAPTER VIII

### OUR JOURNEY TO TUNIS

*January 27-31, 1920*

THE day we left Hammam Meskoutine was one of those rare days, without wind, without dust, the air warm, and the sun brilliant, a perfect day. At seven in the morning the surrounding mountains looked mysterious in the mist, and the colours were very soft. The drive was interesting as well as beautiful : we noticed quantities of *iris stylosa* growing wild along the roadside, and wild white clematis in full flower, hanging in rich festoons over the cactus hedges.

We passed through several little French villages, stopping at three of them in order to take photographs of storks' nests. These strange birds are very fond of building their nests on the churches, on the tip-top of the steeple, building them carefully round the iron crosses which adorn the pinnacles ; and here

they look like enormous bristly mops. We tried to get behind the mind of Mrs. Stork and her nest, designed to be seen of all men, perched in such an exposed position for such a heavy nest. There is a certain amount of method in her choice, for she uses the cross as a kind of scaffolding for her erection, but I should have thought that it was mighty uncomfortable for the long-legged fledglings. The third church we saw had as many as five nests on it.

After four hours we got to Bône, the modern town, close to the ancient Hippo, city of Phœnician and Roman times, and older than Carthage herself, where St. Augustine lived. The day was so delicious that we chose the sea-shore for our picnic, a lovely strand, with the town brilliantly white on higher ground, and beyond the sandy beach, the waters of the Mediterranean at her bluest.

After leaving Bône, the road was rather flat and uninteresting, though there was a promise of mountains ahead. Moreover, a tram-line ran alongside of the road, and, at what I suppose were the stations, we noticed odious little iron seats back to back, with corrugated

roofs, which seemed very much "out of the picture."

Presently, however, an avenue of enormous eucalyptus trees made us forget the tram-lines, and then we passed a large and shallow lake, with reeds and rushes, which was called the "Lac des Oiseaux"; the numbers and the varieties we saw of storks, seagulls, duck, plover, and smaller birds, made it justify its name.

We went on through pretty country, and up and down gently wooded slopes, and at about half-past three we reached La Calle, a bright little seaport town of rather a quaint shape, for in front of it is an island which has been joined to the mainland, and the water in between makes a very snug little harbour. The sea front has a row of majestic palms, which always look delightful with the beautiful blue of the sea beyond, and the bright sun shining on the sandy ground.

We noticed quantities of cork stacked and ready for export, for beyond La Calle, in the Khroumirie country, is a region of extensive cork forests.

We went for a walk before the sun went down, and looked at the picturesque sailing-

boats, like those of Italy, with very long yards, and talked to one or two of the boatmen on the subject of the Coral Fisheries.

North Africa is famous for coral, and La Calle is one of the chief centres of the industry. Through the centuries, different European nations have had the control of the Mediterranean Fisheries (Italy, Spain, and once, for a short time, Britain), but now along these coasts any boat not bearing the French flag is heavily taxed.

The coral is at a considerable depth, and it branches upwards, but the fishing has to be carefully protected, as the same spot must not be visited for ten years, in order that the coral shall have time to recover and develop anew.

Next morning we were to cross the frontier through the Khroumirs' country. The Khroumirs are a race of Berbers, not unlike the Kabyles, but these mountain men have the name of being wild and uncertain, so Jules kept his rifle very much *en évidence* as we neared the frontier.

We were once more crossing the Atlas Mountains, that beautiful range which runs through Tunisia as well as Algeria and Morocco.

Jules explained in his picturesque English, with regard to the frontier, "Between Algeria and Tunisia, they are moving Customers!" meaning that sometimes the *douane* examination takes place in one village and sometimes in another. So we stopped to inquire, and a dear little Frenchwoman, old and worn, told us to go on to Babouche. "I am in great trouble," she said, "for the Khroumirs have attempted to assassinate my son, as he was returning home through the mountains, and he is lying very ill below there—his wife is nursing him; and one night," she went on, "they tried to make an entrance into the house next mine, by removing the tiles!"

As Tunisia has only been under the protectorate of France since 1882, the Khroumirs (especially the older ones) have not yet fallen into line. Through the forest country are several small villages, altogether French, to open up the country. The inhabitants find them lonely enough, but this will improve as Tunisia further develops under French management, and more roads are made for traffic to enlarge their borders, and admit of their moving about safely.

So we passed Babouche, Jules' gun held very stiffly, and we came amongst the lovely wooded hills of La Khroumirie, past a prosperous little French village called Ain Draham, and on through the Cork Forest. These are such pretty trees, *en masse*, with thick dark foliage ; the upper branches look as if they were covered with grey lichen, and grow rather like oak ; whereas the trunk of the tree, where the bark has been removed, is of the colour of polished rose-wood, and the contrast is interesting. The trees do not object to being barked, and the cork grows again. We learned that they are thus barked every ten years, and the first time this is done the cork is not worth much, but every succeeding ten years, with the growth of the tree, it improves both in quality and quantity. It is removed in oblong pieces, and on these one can see the mark of each year's growth clearly. But these pieces have to be treated in various ways before they are ready for export. They are soaked and scraped, and pressed out flat, and when dry are smoked over a fire to make them smooth and compact ; and the great number of stacks we have seen will make us now take a personal interest in life-

belts, and floats for nets, corks, cork legs, cork soles, and cork mats, for evermore !

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The afternoon drive was full of variety ; we stopped for luncheon at Souk-el-Arba, out of the forest country, and gradually got into the mountains that we had seen from far. Here, again, the French engineers had triumphed over surface difficulties, and the turns and loops and zigzags and spirals brought us wonderful views among the mountains, range behind range, with a peep of the sea at the back, as we went higher.

I do not think that I have mentioned that, since Biskra, we have had two motors, L. having sent out his Ford, by sea, before we started for Algiers, but sundry delays at Marseilles and custom-house duties had prevented its arrival, until one evening at Biskra the belated motor sailed triumphantly in, and since then, for the most part, it has taken the luggage.

Hearing an evil report of the Khroumirs, as a tribe, we had never gone very far ahead of Stephens, the chauffeur who drove the Ford. Once we stopped on a wide plateau, between two ranges, to wait for him, Jules remarking,

“Those two men who have just passed by do not su-et me!” and as soon as Stephens came in sight, on we went again.

Now we were winding upwards towards Le Kef, a town on the highest peak of these hills, which commanded a wide view. There was a fine Roman wall built down the hill-side, and in old days evidently encircling the town, and the remains of a large gate, so we got out to see what could be seen.

But the town itself was dirty, and the neglected-looking houses and streets made it less attractive on close acquaintance than it appeared to be in the distance, crowning its hill. Here for the first time we saw a woman with her face completely swathed in black, with only the smallest slit for her eyes—a lugubrious and startling sight.

We did not explore the town very extensively, and presently discovered that the big motor had gone back to look for Stephens, and as its return was delayed, we wondered what accident had happened.

Presently Jules reappeared, wringing his hands. It turned out that some unfriendly natives had more or less blocked the road to

prevent the Ford passing, so the alternative lay between going over a precipice or going into a ditch, and Stephens chose the latter, with the result that the steering gear was badly strained, though he himself was unhurt in any way.

The poor motor was able to crawl in a very wobbly way into the town, where Stephens had to stay the night, arrangements being made for him and the motor to go by train to Tunis next day. Fortunately Le Kef is near the railway.

This all took time, the whole thing becoming rather a nightmare before it was over. The luggage motor had to be unladen, and the crowd of Khroumirs, Arabs, donkeys and mules (it felt as if they all were talking, and all getting in the way) were like a bad dream, and meanwhile we were on a hilly road, the sun was setting, and we had still sixty or seventy kilometres to go.

But eventually we got away, the bright first quarter of the moon and brilliant Jupiter lighting us on our way, and out of the darkness, on the hill-sides, gleamed many tombs of Marabouts. Presently we got on to the smooth

level road made by the Romans, and eventually arrived at Teboursouk.

We have had so little rain hitherto that it was a disappointment next morning to see Teboursouk and its surrounding country looking very grey, and a fine rain coming down. However, as we had come here in order to visit Dougga and its Roman remains, off we went.

The Romans always selected their sites well, and Dougga stands magnificently above a broad valley. The Temple of Jupiter and Minerva is an imposing building, well restored, and its six fluted columns, upholding a fine architrave, are each a single block of marble.

Standing on its broad steps there is a fine view, although the mountains glowered purple to-day against the grey sky. Timgad we had seen under brilliant conditions, but Dougga was frowning. Its citizens, however, had taken a deep interest in its development, as its inscriptions show, two of them presenting to the town this fine Temple.

The Theatre, of which a great deal remains, must have been an unusually beautiful one. The entrances and exits can still be traced, and

the stage has many pillars standing, and remains of statuary.

The Columbarium has been restored, as its stones, though out of place, were more or less intact, and now it probably looks very much as it did in the Roman days. The Romans were very reverent as far as the matter of burial went, for the poorest citizens, and even slaves, had the right to reserve a small niche in the Columbarium, to receive their ashes after cremation, the niches being arranged on the principle of a dovecote—hence the name.

There are remains, also, of the Stadium (the old Race-course), and when Dougga is quite restored it will probably be one of the most interesting of the buried cities, for the lie of the ground over which it is built is most picturesque.

We visited house after house, on different levels of the hill-side, and in some of them we could trace the suite of rooms as in Timgad, but as a rule more of the ancient walls are standing, and many mosaics still remain in their places on the floors of the dwelling-houses, unmoved, as yet, to the safe keeping of any museum.

One thing is curious. From many of the

old Roman houses curling whiffs of smoke arise, for, strange to say, Dougga is not entirely deserted. The Arabs, proverbially lazy, have made use of the half-built Roman houses, and finished the building with mud bricks, and put on untidy thatches like those on their own huts, the *gourbis*, and here they live. Other houses have been converted into shelters and stables for the mules and goats, and over the line of the ancient streets, which lie beneath, are well-beaten foot-tracks, where an Arab toils uphill leading his donkey, accepting this desolate world of ruins as his "Home, sweet Home."

But perhaps the oddest "home" of all was one underground, which may have been a dungeon or an ancient cellar, or, possibly, a dwelling-house, not yet excavated.

We suddenly came upon a hole in the ground, with a slight erection, designed, perhaps, for a roof, though it is so low that you could step on to it. Looking into the hole, we saw a fire below, say seven or eight feet down, and an Arab woman beside it, cheerfully preparing the midday meal in a pottery bowl, the faces of two or three children gleaming upwards out of the darkness.

“*Couscous?*” I asked of the Lady of the Hole. She raised her head, grinning, and said, “*Oui, oui!*” and continued stirring the dish briskly, while the face of an old woman now became visible, and two or more children appeared whom I had not noticed before. How many more occupants there were of that happy home I cannot say. How they all lived down there passes imagination.

We then returned to Teboursouk, and after luncheon set off for Tunis, passing through some rather squalid villages on our way; on the whole the drive was uninteresting, particularly on a rainy day.

It was getting dusk by the time we reached Tunis. Tunis—which has watched the rise and fall of so many younger towns, a venerable city, but to all appearance still flourishing and full of life.

## CHAPTER IX

### TUNIS

*Jan. 30–Feb. 16, 1920*

OUR first impression of Tunis as we walked down its Avenue de France was that of a typical modern, cosmopolitan town, wide streets, solid houses, fine shops, tram-lines, a good many uniforms, and representatives of most of the civilised nations in the passers-by.

But when, in the afternoon, we drove under a great Moorish arch, everything changed in a moment, as if dissolved by the wand of a magician. We got out of our little carriage and walked over paving-stones, up one of the streets of Old Tunis (a narrow, curving street with small shops on either side, and roofs of uneven height), and by degrees the view “dissolved” further, and we found ourselves in a labyrinth of narrow, covered streets, the *souks*, or bazaars of Tunis, crowded, full of movement, and entirely Oriental.

Some of them were roofed with sloping planks, uneven and displaced, but highly picturesque, and capable of flooding the street below with sunshine or with rain. Other streets were darker, and with a more solid roofing, arched and supported with painted pillars, green and red, like sugar-sticks, and occasional round skylights open to the air.

The shops themselves, on both sides of the narrow streets, were tiny. Arabs seem to like selling their wares in little dens with open fronts. Here they were making their goods as well as selling them, which added to the hum and buzz one felt all around.

We stopped to look at a shoemaker at work, with huge scissors cutting the yellow morocco leather "vamps" by eye, not by laid-on pattern. As in all Eastern bazaars, each street has its special trade, and this was the street of the shoemakers. This plan certainly simplifies buying.

At right angles is the street of the candle-makers; each bazaar was arranged differently, but there were candles in all. The hand of Fatma, with five waxen branches, appeared in most of them, but there is a great variety in

the twisting and fluting and ornamentation on the different candles. What adds to the general effect is the fact that the framework of each shop is painted in different colours, very gay and very unusual.

Then we turned to the right, down a street which was darker than the others, and which led to the street of the leather-sellers, and here we saw all the beautiful Arab saddles on sale, and many of their gay trappings in the making. We have so often admired these in the distance, on mountain, and plain, and desert, that it was most interesting to see and examine them at close quarters, the saddles red and green, ornamented with gold, or studded with brass, bridles of all sorts, and embroidered girths and blinkers. Here, too, were quantities of attractive little things made out of the odds and ends of leather: purses, card-cases, pocket mirrors, and bags all embroidered with stiff gold and silver thread.

We watched an artist at the corner of a street, where three ways met, painting his impression of the maze of arches, supporting what is here a vaulted roof. The ramification of this rabbit warren of narrow streets is a

great strain on the bump of locality. A. and I were confident that we could find our way alone, but we wandered far before we again found the street of the leather-sellers. There was one strange landmark in it, for which we were searching—a green coffin, ornamented with painted patterns and making narrower the already narrow way, though the shops on either side of it “gave” a little to make room for it, and for the constant stream of busy people that passed to the right and left of it, putting a high polish on its edges as they squeezed past it. Needless to say it is the coffin of a Marabout, set there to confer a special blessing on the *souks*. Dead or living, the Marabouts loom large in Tunis. When L. bought a carpet the seller piously asked for “Forty francs more, to give to the Marabout!” and constantly the same thing happens in a smaller way, till we harden our hearts, and believe that the absent Marabout sees very little of these doles, but that his name acts as a useful lever to extract rather a higher price from the travellers than they had intended giving.

Eventually, with joy, we found the green coffin, which, if extraordinary, is a most valuable

landmark for the lost. For some time we had been going round and round like rats in a trap, rather puzzled as to how we had got into the *souks*, or how we were going to find our way out. We had seen the Souk des Dames, scarves, and stuffs, and wearing apparel; the Souks of the Turks selling perfumes and sweets, and moulding and steaming fezes on a metal shape; the Souks of the Jews, and another street of nothing but copper things, where, in the back of the den, we noticed the well-known bowls of copper and brass, with crinkled edges, being hammered out by hand.

All the time keen buying and selling goes on : in many instances a lazy old Turk in a red fez is seen, at the side of the entrance, half lying down and smoking, while others, younger and more alert, implore the passers-by to look in.

There are many streets full of Jewish shops, for there are 50,000 Jews in Tunis, with an important Jewish quarter—as many Jews, in fact, as all the different Europeans put together, and these astute dealers carry their goods into the street, and shout out that they are for sale, and Arabs stride along also, carrying *burnouses*

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and *gondouras* over their shoulders, offering them to the various shopkeepers in the street.

All this fuss and bustle and noise made us feel that we were in the hub of a very funny universe. Everybody is so concentrated on the business in hand, and there is such eager traffic, barter and exchange, such sumptuous rugs, carpets, glittering metal-work and jewellery, and every variety of clothes, sounds and cries.

Here and there are a few women buying, their faces in Tunis being entirely covered with a tight, black crape veil, a most lugubrious sight, and startling, when you first see it, as we did in Le Kef, in contrast with their white robes. One notices all over Tunis the heavily "grilled" windows, behind which many women's eyes are probably looking out upon the passers-by, and one wonders how many years will disappear before these Eastern women will emerge from what appears to us to be an intolerable tyranny, and combine to revolt, refusing any longer to tie up their pretty faces in black crape on a day when the sky is blue, and the sun is shining.

But I think the fat Jewesses of Tunis are one of its most curious sights. Never have we

seen such fat women, or so many of them in one town, lumbering about swathed in white, with voluminous pantaloons and high-heeled shoes.

We made an expedition to a place called Korbous, on the peninsula opposite Carthage, a wonderfully beautiful spot, where rheumatic, lame and very fat people seek a cure. Here we saw the fattest Jewesses possible, in their remarkable Tunis costumes, sitting in rows in the sunshine or wearily walking up the hill.

Korbous rises sheer from the sea, and the hills are of a considerable height, protecting the invalids from almost every wind that blows, while out of the mountain-side flow healing waters, hot sulphur springs ; and down by the sea-shore we climbed on to the rocks at one point, where gallons of boiling sulphur water pour into the sea continually.

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Tunisia has been under the protection of France since the year 1882, but it is nominally governed by the Bey of Tunis. He comes to his palace near the *souks* every Monday morning, to confer with his ministers on matters of State. We went over his palace, and sat in the Bey's chair, and looked round his room.

It is a room of fine proportions, ornamented with the very delicate plaster-work for which Arab art is famous, and yet it was extraordinarily like the *salon* of a French provincial hotel, a general feeling of red brocade, gilt mirrors, clocks in abundance, glass shades, inferior oil paintings, and cheap engravings.

The position of the Bey is hereditary, and one family, the House of Hussein, has held it since the sixteen-hundreds, the succession being confirmed to this family when France assumed the Protectorate. The power of the Bey is limited—he is practically a figure-head, with a hundred soldiers of his own to uphold his dignity ; but all affairs of State are actually in the hands of his ministers, two of whom are natives, and the rest French. The Prime Minister is one of the two natives, and the other is the Minister of the Native Courts of Justice, and, from all one hears, this arrangement seems to work quite well, for the present at any rate, and the town, both native and European, looks most prosperous, and all seem satisfied. The French colonists, like those we saw in their little villages in La Khroumirie, and in the more isolated farms throughout the

country districts, may, however, have another story to tell.

We went up to the roof of the palace, and here had an admirable bird's-eye view of the whole of the White City, and in the distance we could see the place where Carthage used to stand. Very little is left on the ancient spot, for its pillars and statues, vases and mosaics, and priceless inlaid marbles beautify the palaces of Tunis now, as well as those of many newer towns and countless Arab villas.

They beautify exceedingly the Bardo, another palace of the Bey, a few miles from Tunis. Here there is a stately Hall of Justice, where the room is divided lengthways into three, like a basilica, by two rows of beautiful pillars from Carthage.

In this room the sentence of death is passed upon criminals by the Bey; but, strange to say, if the family of the condemned man agree to buy back his life with money, they can do so. The room looked too beautiful to be used for so grim a purpose, the walls having bold panellings from the Roman city of Carthage, designs in coloured marbles of yellow, white, red, green, grey and blue.

It is very curious when classical pillars, as

in these Tunis palaces, support ornamental friezes and ceilings of the finest Arab plaster-work. The pillars have a totally different ancestry and history, the feeling in the art of each is poles apart (stucco-work and fluted marble), yet the lacy delicacy of the Arab geometric patterns, following in their design the shape of the cupola, or ceiling, or frieze, is immensely interesting, for it is a kaleidoscopic chance in the course of history that has brought these diverse arts together in North Africa, in such close and constant combination.

The most striking reminder in this part of the world of the power of ancient Rome is felt as one catches the first glimpse of the mighty aqueduct that united Zaghouan and Carthage.

The question of an adequate water supply in North Africa has always been a matter of gravest concern to all colonists, from Phoenician days onwards. Many of the rivers, both in Algeria and Tunisia, lose themselves in the sand before they arrive at the coast, and no river in either country is navigable.

To collect the rain-water the Carthaginians

made use of large shallow pits, and there are remains of Punic cisterns and of Roman ones in perfect condition, and reservoirs of considerable size; but in the second century, when Carthage was at the height of its prosperity, a plan of the first magnitude was suggested—that of connecting the city with the mountains of Zaghouan (eighty miles distant) by means of an aqueduct.

There had been a time of serious drought, when the whole countryside was laid desolate, the people dying from plague and disease. So the Emperor Hadrian gave orders from Rome for the construction of this great aqueduct, and from a never-failing spring at Zaghouan six million gallons of water flowed daily into Carthage. Underground canals on the higher ground and these magnificent arches, hundreds of which still remain, spanned the plains and valleys, carrying the water at an even level.

To this day the same source has yielded a never-failing supply, and the water that the three travellers drank at Tunis came from the same limpid mountain stream at Zaghouan that had supplied Carthage in the Roman days.

The ancient masonry channels are sound as ever and in use to-day, and the old Roman route is followed ; but, in these more enlightened though less romantic days, iron pipes take the place of lofty arches.

The arches that remain, in whatever part of the route one comes across them, look strong enough to last another eighteen hundred years, and when we ask questions about the destruction of the aqueduct in places, the inevitable answer comes, "Destroyed by the Vandals !" I believe that Belisarius the Byzantine, when he checked the Vandals in 533, set to work to have the aqueduct restored, and it suffered its worst damage a thousand years later, when it was wantonly destroyed by the Spaniards in the sixteenth century.

It is rather curious how Spain at one time had a good chance of getting hold of the whole colony. The enterprising Charles V, when waging war in the Mediterranean against the Algerian pirates, marched on Tunis and delivered ten thousand Christian slaves from imprisonment in the Kasbah, and then marched north and took Bizerta and Bône.

On our way to Zaghuan we came across Spanish remains—a deserted Spanish city. La Mahomédia is its name, and the Bey of Tunis had a large palace there; the adjoining buildings were once *souks*, and in Ahmed Bey's time it was a military headquarters with barracks for fifteen thousand troops, so the deserted city covered a considerable space and was built on different levels.

But its ruins are scarcely picturesque, and the place looked entirely deserted and wholly depressing, when, round the corner of what was once the Bey's palace, we caught sight of a little shock head peeping at us, and another, and another, and presently a nice little girl of fourteen or fifteen came round the corner, very gaily dressed, a bright kerchief binding her hair, and her dress fastened with a brooch on her shoulder.

The whole of this happy family lived in a spacious hall in the Beylical palace, in the utmost squalor; the grandmamma arose out of a shadowy corner, while the pleasant lady of the house welcomed us with charming manners. The donkey shared the regal home, and dogs and fowl abounded.

Certainly the Housing Problem is faced to-day, in the environs of Tunis, in the most original manner. The natives near Carthage use the ruined Roman cisterns as dwelling-houses, the Dougga peasants we have mentioned are content to live eight feet underground in a hole, while others thatched the Roman villas, repairing the walls with mud bricks in order to render them habitable, and now this attractive family and all their animals are content to remain the only residents in a deserted Spanish city.

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There is one small portion of Tunis "that is for ever England"—the St. George's cemetery. It was bought, out and out, nearly three hundred years ago, in the year 1635, to belong to England for ever. In those days it was outside the city; now the town of Tunis has grown round it, and it is no longer used as a cemetery. The English church, in the centre, stands amongst the tombs, and among the many there is one memorial of special interest to British and Americans alike, that of John Howard Payne, the author of "Home, Sweet Home," who died in Tunis in 1852.

## CHAPTER X

### “ROMAN REMAINS” AND CARTHAGE

THE Musée Alaoui, at Tunis, is one of the buildings of the Bardo which contains the result of the excavations of Roman towns in Tunisia, and above all of those of Carthage.

The expression, “Roman remains,” brings before one’s mind a vision of rows and rows of gods and heroes, more or less in every stage of disrepair, with a background of pillars, broken bas-reliefs, pottery, and cinerary urns. All these are to be found at this museum, a most interesting and representative collection ; but, in a special way, at the Musée Alaoui, we were fascinated by the wealth of mosaics, representing the *vie champêtre* of these ancient Roman colonies with singular freshness.

Quite delightful is the representation of the country seat of the Roman gentleman,

the *maison et parc du maître*, as it is called in the catalogue. It has two square towers with pointed roofs, tiled in two colours, and these are at the far corners of the house, which is built round an inner courtyard, two stories high. The upper windows open on to a loggia with eight arches, and the square courtyard is evidently arched all round on the ground-floor. It looks ridiculously modern ; its trees and flowers are shown, and in front there is water ; one duck is in the act of catching a fish, while another is gliding down the stream. There are two pheasants, and two little quails. The front-door has a porch with very modern-looking curved red tiles, and the back-door is arched. So that life two thousand years ago does not seem to have been so radically different as one sometimes imagines.

In another large mosaic a man is standing at his cottage door, which had a pointed porch and three very small windows. It is a farm-yard scene, and some of the sheep are browsing as they approach the farm, and the goats have got on ahead. The ploughman is returning with his yoke of oxen, one horse is tethered to a post, and another is being watered, and

at the foot of the picture a woman is snaring birds for the evening meal, while round the corner a boy is milking the goats.

Talking of evening meals, there is a delightful mosaic of a dinner-party. The guests are dining at separate tables, three at each table, and they are sitting on divans which have comfortable backs. There is space enough for the servant to come in between the tables ; one greedy guest is holding out his glass for more wine, although there is a very modern-looking decanter half full on the table. One servant carries a knife in his right hand and a dish in the left ; another had six little pies on a plate. As an accompaniment to the general conversation (for all the guests look very lively), we see some musicians playing the castanets, while one plays an organ, like St. Cecilia's in Raphael's picture—a delightful glimpse of Roman life.

Another interesting mosaic showed some builders at work. We noticed a great many tools in use to-day : mallets, hammer, saw, set square, and chisel. One workman was laying a mosaic, and a man with a sack on his shoulder was pouring out of it cut-square coloured

stones. In another part of the picture a man was driving a pair of horses, harnessed to a cart, in which was a little pillar which had just been finished, and was ready to be set up. They were all so busy in this scene, and the overseer was easily distinguished from the workmen. The numbers of birds and beasts and fishes, too, are most interesting. We noticed bears, boars, bulls, donkeys, foxes, flamingoes, goats, hares, horses, leopards, pigeons, peacocks, partridges, pheasants, quails, tigers, and a rabbit eating a turnip.

It really is wonderful how the character in these different animals is hit off to the life, when one thinks of the limitations of the material, little square bits of natural coloured stones. The fishes, too, are a marvel ; but the fishes of the Mediterranean are mysterious in shape and colour, and very difficult to name.

Looking at these mosaics one feels as if one had stepped into the daily life of the people of nearly two thousand years ago, and we see the painter at work, with his pot of paint in one hand and his brush in the other, and feel for the two thirsty travellers, who (in a mosaic only unearthed last year at Dougga) are in

the act of stopping two water-carriers, who have leather bottles on their shoulders, and are asking them for some of the water to be poured into the cups they are holding out.

Is it possible that the North African Roman caught the knack of thus representing his daily life from ancient Egypt?

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But the ground floor of the museum is of peculiar and deepest interest. In a stone vaulted hall, upheld by classic pillars, are memorials of the early Christian Church at Carthage. A fine white marble font is in the centre, in the shape of a cross, let into the ground and level with it, and having two steps leading down to the water for baptism.

All round the walls of this hall are touching memorials of the martyrs who suffered death in the theatre of Carthage. There are several tombs in stone, and some in white marble. Some of the symbols on these are engraved, and some in relief, and covering the walls are mosaics from other tombs, which show in what tender reverence the remains of these early martyrs were held. These tombs and inscriptions were discovered within the last thirty years.

The symbols, interwoven with the design of the inscription, are all deeply interesting, though the hidden meaning in many is obscure. The early Christians conveyed much teaching by these graven symbols, which at the time were fully understood by all of them, but kept secret from all outside, so as to preserve their most precious beliefs from pagan blasphemy.

Many of these symbols are clear to us now, but others, in their arrangement and selection, are not easy to understand. All have the monogram between the letter Alpha and Omega. This is often surrounded by the victor's wreath, and most of them have doves. Sometimes there is a duck, a donkey, sheep, and, of course, very often fish; in one, a wreath of fish. All have a chalice, and nearly all two lighted torches; occasionally a tree between two sheep, sometimes quails, even pheasants.

On some of the tombs are representations of the martyrs themselves. Probably the mosaics have not preserved the likeness to any extent, as such art is scarcely fine enough for portraits, but we saw the dress, the attitude, the colouring, and this in itself was most wonderfully interesting.

Then our minds went back to Church history, as we touched the very mosaic which had covered the remains of the martyr Perpetua, who was only twenty-two years of age, and went into the arena at Carthage brave as a lion, encouraging those with her, and leaving her father and mother and her baby-in-arms behind.

She suffered death in A.D. 203, with her friends Felicitas, Saturninus and Revocatus, and her brother Saturus, who with her fought and died among the wild beasts for their faith, while all Carthage looked on, in the crowded theatre. There is a full-length mosaic portrait of her in flowing robes, with doves on either side of her, and the simple epitaph, "Perpetua in Pace."

The simplicity of the epitaphs is very touching ; all have the words "In pace," "Marciana, in pace dulcis," and many young martyrs' names are followed by "Innocens in pace." "Blossi" stands with hands uplifted, two lions on either side of him. This large mosaic is full of emblems. "Primulus" has two doves, and their outspread tails form a wreath ; in fact the tails turn into palm leaves. Concordia,

Pompeia, Pascas Victoriamus, all “In pace,” the latter in the robes of a deacon, with his hands outspread.

I copied out some of the inscriptions, leaning my paper on a marble tomb, on which was written, beneath the monogram of Christ, “Amantius, Fidelis in Pace—vixit annos xxxiii.” One felt, when touching their very tombs, the human side of “The white-robed multitude” during all those cruel years of persecution, when the cry of the pagan crowd rang in the theatre at Carthage, “To the lions! to the lions!” and these tender human forms were torn and mutilated.

The inscriptions reveal the immediate feelings of those who survived (though with the not unlikely prospect of a similar death), and yet the day of martyrdom to them appeared a day of victory. Always on the tomb the monogram, with Alpha and Omega, always words of inspiring courage, a sense of triumph, palm leaves, laurel leaves, crowns, the certainty that they had passed through death to larger life—“In pace dulcis”—these being the memorials of those very men and women of whom Tertullian of Carthage was thinking when he wrote the

memorable sentence—"The blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church."

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One day we went to Carthage and stood in the theatre, which now appears little more than a great green hill-side, a little of which has been excavated, showing a glimpse of two or three of the tiers of seats of white marble with mosaic floors. The green hill-side shows the size and also the shape of what historians tell us was once the most beautiful building of the kind ever known.

But in Carthage one's thoughts fly much further back than Roman times, to the semi-mythical days when the Phœnician Queen Dido came across the seas from her city of Tyre to found this town, giving it the Canaanite name of **KIRJATH HARESHETH**, *i.e.* the New Town.

The great queen, so the story goes, made a very moderate request to the natives on landing. She only required as much land as could be enclosed by a bull's hide, and then her wily Majesty set to work, cut the hide into the narrowest strips possible, and enclosed the whole

Hill of Byrsa (Byrsa meaning the Hide of the Bull).

We walked up Queen Dido's hill and looked at the sea, and wondered where she made her famous landing, and how great an escort of ships the harbours of Tyre had afforded her.

On the hill of Byrsa—nothing remains now of its ancient Punic splendour ;—on its summit stands a dull chapel in memory of St. Louis ; but once Byrsa was the Citadel of Carthage, crowned with a Temple of Aesculapius, with a flight of sixty great steps leading up to it. Beauty of line was not the characteristic of Punic architecture, the effect aimed at was that of massive weight. A wonderful wall ran round it, a triple wall with towers at intervals sufficient to give stabling to 300 elephants and 4000 horses, with all provisions necessary in case of a long siege.

It is only by realising that the walls, which were hollow, were built 60 feet high and 33 feet deep, that we can credit the statement that in addition to the animals and their provender, 20,000 infantry and 4000 cavalry were housed within the walls, which were built in stories,

and divided into "quarters." A Roman consul compared it to an encampment.

But it is the name of *Hannibal* that first comes to the mind in connection with Punic Carthage, though the greater part of his life was spent in Spain. From Carthagena (New Carthage) he mobilised the great army with which he faced the Roman power. Cavalry, infantry and elephants he brought through southern France in the spring of 218 B.C. and over the Alps, and there was one period when the fate of the future history of the world hung in the balance, but Rome conquered.

"When all mankind were in suspense  
To whether of the twain,  
Carthage or Rome, would fall the lot  
O'er land and sea to reign."

*Lucretius (Baring's translation).*

Hannibal, though universally accorded the fame of having been one of the most brilliant generals the world has ever known, was ill supported from Carthage, and he was forced to give way, and for fifty years the proud Queen City existed only as a conquered town, with a patched-up peace.

But the Romans wanted more than this. They coveted her unequalled position in the centre of the southern Mediterranean shore, and on a feeble pretext declared war upon her ("Delenda est Carthago" being the famous order issued from Rome), and notwithstanding a heroic defence, Carthage was reduced to ashes in the year 146 B.C.

We visited the Punic Museum and were very much interested in all we found there. It is from the scant remains that have been recovered from the Punic tombs that any idea of the splendour of those ancient days can be imagined. Phœnicians are said to have distributed the culture of the ancients among the countries they colonised, but to have added to it very little that was original, first adapting Egyptian art and learning, and then Greek. But their craftsmanship is fine beyond description, and we saw an interesting collection of embossed metal-work, scarabs, seals, razors used by the Priests of Baal, and jewelled ornaments in gold and silver.

After the great Punic city had lain for years a stark ruin, Rome set to work to build a new town, and Rome was at her proudest when she

rebuilt Carthage. A city arose surpassing in magnificence what had gone before, and ranking as the third city in the Roman Empire, rivalling, in her opulence and glory, Antioch, Alexandria, and even Rome herself.

It is melancholy to walk about on these green hill-sides and think of the beating heart of life once felt in every square inch of it. Wherever there is a flat space it is now scored with the plough, and on the slopes much green grass. Deep silence now—the silence of the grave ; broken plinths and capitals, lately unearthed, arranged in rows along the stage of that theatre which has figured so centrally in the stories of early Church history. Here are a few mosaic floors, there are some basements of ancient Roman houses, a hint of the direction in which the streets ran, but no more, very little remaining to suggest what once she was. To-day one sees small bits of rare coloured marbles, lying broken in scattered heaps among the ruins, but everything of value that could possibly be removed during the last thousand years or more has been carried off.

Roman Carthage, in her day, held her head high, a power throughout the world for five

or six centuries, a centre of art, learning, and commerce.

But the iron will of the Roman Empire had been broken before the sack of Rome by Alaric the Goth in 410, and now, twenty-two years later, the Emperor Valentinian III was ready to yield any North African town to Genseric the Vandal if only Carthage might be allowed to remain standing.

And so she remained intact for ninety-four years more, but everything was changed, her prestige was gone, she was merely the headquarters of the Vandal host—of no account—a nest of pirates, a centre of lawlessness, bereft of honour, shorn of dignity, sinking lower as the years went by, till finally she was laid in the dust at the coming of the Byzantines, and never raised her head again, and the Arabs a hundred years later gave her her final coup.

Then came the vultures of all nations, and Carthage became a mere quarry; the Cathedral of Pisa, for instance, being largely built of her stones and pillars, many of which also found their way to Genoa, the Genoese sailors boasting that they never returned home without a ballast of valuable marbles.

The Ancients discovered treasures of colour in the mountains of Africa, and broken fragments are at Carthage to-day, of yellow, white, green, and red marbles, for any tourist to pick up and take away.

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Looking round as we drove back towards Tunis, in order to have one last impression of this ancient spot, we discovered that after we had only gone fifty yards or so, we could distinguish little besides the modern buildings, the cathedral, the church of St. Louis, and the buildings in connection with the Pères blancs, Cardinal Lavigerie's missionary order of monks. The real Carthage has vanished into the past, as a tale that is told—a tale that, in the telling, influenced the history of the world for thirteen hundred years, and the memory of which stirs the heart for all time.

## CHAPTER XI

### SOUTHERN TUNISIA

*February 9-14, 1920*

(By L.)

ON Monday, February 9, Jules Durand and I left Tunis for Kairouan. We had luncheon at Enfidaville, and reached Kairouan and the Hôtel de France early in the afternoon. I visited the *souks* and also the Great Mosque, the Mosque of the Barber, and the Mosque of Swords, where two great swords are shown.

The Great Mosque is very fine; it has three hundred marble columns inside and three hundred outside. The inlaid doors are magnificent. From the minaret a fine view is obtained over the whole city. The walls are extremely thick, very probably made so in former times in view of a possible siege.

The Mosque of the Barber has some beautiful oriental tracery and fine ceilings. I also saw an immense enclosed basin of water made by a

former resident in order to supply the city with water.

In the evening I saw the Zaouia—a religious ceremony. A Marabout, or High Priest, was there. A number of people formed up in line, and to a sound of chanting swayed sideways, backwards, and forwards. After a time, several stepped out from the line and prepared for the ceremony. A long, thin, pointed sword was handed round for us to see, and similar swords were used by the self-torturers, set in thick circular handles of wood. One or two of the devotees stripped to the waist and submitted to have swords pierced through their shoulders and their sides, while two other swords penetrated their waists ; then kneeling down, they submitted to have the wooden shields hammered, so that the swords should pierce their waists still deeper. One man I saw had both cheeks pierced by a sword from right to left, and another sword pierced through both his cheeks from left to right. One devotee ate cactus, and another rolled on cactus.

At the end of each religious rite the Marabout whispered in the ear of the devotee. What he said I know not, but apparently not even

a mark was left from the self-torture. As regards eating cactus and rolling on it, in the ordinary way a prick from cactus draws blood at once, and the plant is said to be very poisonous in its nature, but in the case of the self-torture no effect whatever is seen. Another devotee ate glass, and so eager was he that he reached upwards, like a dog begging for cake, when the glass was held out to him. A waiter at my hotel was one of the devotees, and on my return to the hotel he ate some glass for our benefit. The religious ceremony is said to take place every week.

On Tuesday, February 10, I left Kairouan for Gabes. The road runs over a flat plain, and at length far ahead I saw the mighty mass of the Amphitheatre of El Djem ; the road runs right up to the centre of the Amphitheatre, which makes a most impressive appearance ; it is nearly as large as the Coliseum at Rome. It is in four stages, but is now nearly all in ruins.

In the Amphitheatre is the entrance, now blocked up, of a tunnel which is said to have run to the sea some six miles away. Various explanations have been given as to the reason



PALM CULTURE



A MEDENINE BEAUTY



for the tunnel, perhaps the most probable being that it was used for the purpose of flooding the Amphitheatre in Roman times for water-sports.

We went on to Sfax, and had luncheon at the *Hôtel de France*, after which we started for Gabes, arriving there at six o'clock. On Wednesday, February 11, I motored to Medenine; Captain Le Cocq, who has a military appointment there, met me and showed me round the town. The houses are built with the staircase outside instead of inside; the Captain induced a native to climb up one of the houses to show us how they reached the upper stories; it was quite an athletic feat. The houses used to be built as high as five stories, but they are now seldom built to more than two stories, and the houses are reported to be not so popular as they used to be. Those of five stories are, it is said, gradually crumbling to decay. It appears that the curious method of house-building that is seen at Medenine was partly owing to the scarcity of wood in former days, and partly as a means of defence.

From Medenine I went on to Zarzis, and had luncheon at the *Hôtel de l'Oasis*, and then

on to El Kantara, arriving there about one o'clock. Here I transferred the baggage to a little boat and crossed over to the island of Djerba. The water was very low and the passage was difficult. It took about three hours to cross to the island, only four kilometres away. In Roman times there was a road connecting the island with the continent, but the road, though it still exists, is now to a great extent in ruins.

At El Kantara we found a motor waiting for us, in which we motored to Hount Souk. The Hôtel de la Victoire there was extremely unattractive, but fortunately the Civil Controller, Monsieur Leo Renoux, had sent a message saying that he would put us up for the night. His house was most charming, as were our kind host and hostess.

The island of Djerba is extremely fertile, and later in the year must be one mass of foliage. There are olive trees of great size, said to date back to Roman times. On Thursday, February 12, the Civil Controller showed us round Hount Souk. There is a very picturesque Spanish citadel there called Borj-l'Kebir, now greatly fallen into ruins. On the

island there are many buildings with circular roofs, said to have been also built in that way owing to the scarcity of wood in former times, as in the case of the houses at Medenine. We motored through the island, visiting the different little towns it contained, and visited a very interesting mosque that had been transformed into a Jewish synagogue. Here a number of old men with long beards were sitting and reciting, or being recited to, from the Talmud, I suppose—a most interesting sight.

We returned to the mainland from Djem, landing at La Marsa in a very short time. Here I saw a little Arab girl rush up to her father, who had crossed in our boat, and embrace him wildly.

The Arabs seem extremely fond of their children, and that is one of the pleasant features of travel in their country.

At La Marsa our crew were in the best of spirits and danced about, Durand setting them a good example by doing the same.

Captain Le Cocq had come in our motor, which had arrived at La Marsa, and he returned with us to Medenine. On the way we stopped

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at Bou Grara and saw the Roman remains there. Not very much work has been done at Bou Grara in the way of excavation, and now the finances of France are in such a state that it is to be feared that little money for such work will be available for some time to come, and the Arab who used to be paid half a franc a day for assisting in excavation now expects six francs.

The French Government used before the war to provide £2000 a year for the work at Timgad ; it has now been reduced to £1000.

From Medenine we returned to Gabes.

The next day, February 13, I drove in a small hired motor over an awful road to Matmata, the country of the Troglodytes. It may be said that from a distance you see nothing of the busy life going on below ground.

Imagine a huge cylindrical excavation open at the top to the sky ; it is reached from above by a path that gradually slopes down, and, winding round, leads through a tunnel into the cavern.

Round the cavern are some half a dozen separate roomy chambers that are used as bedrooms ; those that are so used have often the



MATMATA. A TROGLODYTE HOUSE



ISLAND OF DJERBA. PRIMITIVE HOUSES WITH VAULTED ROOFS



beds constructed in an ornamental manner, apparently of plaster. Various ornaments are about, and the rooms are carefully swept and garnished. A camel may be seen in one compartment, and in some cases there is an upper range of rooms reached by means of a rope.

The dwellings are by no means uncomfortable—they must be warm in winter, absolutely protected from wind and weather, and cool in summer.

The first we went into was inhabited by a picturesque native family ; several of the girls were extremely handsome and covered with jewels, and the children were ducks.

We also saw a dwelling where the hand of Fatma had been carved in many directions on the stone-work. This dwelling was, I believe, about two hundred years old.

The first we entered might have been of any age, two thousand years or more. It was the best we saw, for everything was harmonious and unspoilt.

Returning to Gabes we visited the *souks*, bought some *burnouses*, and also drove through part of the Oasis, the park of the town.

We then motored to Sfax, found that no

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room was to be had, and went to the hotel at El Djem, arriving there at about 1 a.m. Here we were very comfortable.

Next morning, February 14, I saw the Amphitheatre again and motored to Sousse ; had luncheon at the Hôtel de France and visited the *souks* and also the museum, where there are some very good mosaics, reminiscent of those at the Bardo at Tunis.

We then went on to Nabeul and bought Arabian pottery at a potter's there, and from thence to Tunis, which we reached at about 8 p.m.

With regard to Medenine and Matmata, a Report on Tunisia runs thus :—

“ **MEDENINE ARCHITECTURE** (p. 996).

“ Towards the south, north of Djerba, architecture runs to oblong houses with vaulted roofs and rude earth buttresses, and finished up with triangular ends.

“ These vaulted roofs, primitive in construction, are found again in Medenine and other places. The vaulted rooms are built side by side, and for want of space the owners build a second story, another room with a vaulted roof on the top of the other ; thus they go on when



MEDENINE MAIDENS



MEDENINE ARCHITECTURE



their houses want enlarging, building one on top of the other. The houses are generally built round a central court, and the outside of the houses facing the country has the appearance of a solid wall. The little vaulted rooms, one on top of another, constitute a little fortress, to which it would be difficult to effect an entrance.

“To get to the upper stories one must go carefully on hands and feet up the rough little staircases on the face of the house. These buildings make good storehouses, and there are curious native wooden locks which keep the provisions safe.

“From the point of view of defence, and most likely from the fact of wood being scarce, or else in search of a cool place, these people also have dwelling-places underground.

“There are many *Troglodytes* in Tunisia, but the type found at Matmata are the most curious.

“They cut out of the sandy soil a big cube-shaped hole about thirty feet square, and this makes the court of the underground house. When that part is complete, then they carve out the rooms, out of the solid ground opening into the court, their ‘roofs’ being arched, which makes them unlikely to fall in.

“Their beasts also are lodged underground, a passage being cut, down which they walk to their stables.”

## CHAPTER XII

### TUNIS TO ALGIERS

*February 16-26, 1920*

L. RETURNED from his tour in Southern Tunisia on Saturday evening, and on the following Monday we left Tunis on our return journey to Algiers. Our first stopping-place was at BIZERTA, the most northerly town in Africa (and it seemed to us to be full of life and progress), with a fine harbour and break-water, many ships at anchor, and a row of palms near the sea. We were ferried across the canal by a suspension ferry, motors and all, in company with a crowd of Arabs, donkeys and carts.

The French believe that Bizerta is going to become one of the chief coaling-stations of the Mediterranean, ranking with Malta and Algiers, and that it has a great future before it. However that may be, it has had a long past behind

it, and the length of that great past intensifies the present interest in every road, village and town in this beautiful part of the world.

The adventurous Phœnicians, voyaging to many lands, brought with them much of the knowledge and the culture of the ancients, and disseminated it amongst the nations with whom they traded. We are told that they added to it very little that was original, and yet they gave us our alphabet!

One can easily imagine how, in their business settlements, they would find the elaborate picture writing of Egyptian hieroglyphics altogether too slow and too cumbersome for practical use. So by degrees these signs and symbols were simplified (necessity being the mother of invention), and a primitive alphabet was evolved, the ancestor of all alphabets, including the Roman letters used by us to-day, many of which show in their form traces of their long descent.

Here one is apt to look upon Time less as "an ever-rolling stream" than as a solid track, marked by definite milestones, for the history of the Seven Conquerors affects each place differently, but each leaves its mark. The French are making Bizerta into a bright little

up-to-date town, a *ville coquette*, as the guide-book puts it, and it was quite in keeping with the gay little town, on the day of our arrival, to hear the exhilarating hum of an aeroplane overhead, and to feel our feet firmly planted in the twentieth century. But in a moment, as the aeroplane disappeared, our thoughts, more quickly still, sped backwards nearly 3000 years, to the town built by the Tyrian colonists on this same spot, with its great canal made in those early days, across which we had just been ferried.

The Phœnicians were direct descendants of the men of Tyre, whose ancestors had lived in Canaan before the coming of Joshua, the son of Nun ; the Carthaginian language was still spoken in the fourth and fifth centuries, and St. Augustine describes it as having a close resemblance to Hebrew.

From the fact, however, of Bizerta being a seaport, her "remains" do not remain. There has always been much coming and going between the seaport towns of Northern Africa and Southern Europe, and the Genoese and others carried away all they could. The Moors, when driven out of Spain, came here in great numbers,

and had their own Quartier Andalouse in the Arab town.

For in Bizerta the two towns are close to each other—the French one, which has all its thoughts upon the future, and the quiet, time-touched Arab town, which has all its thoughts upon the past. We walked up its paved streets, with arches at intervals supporting the houses on either side, small grilled windows set high and unevenly, an occasional finely-studded door with raised boss and pendant ring-handle, and here and there, over a doorway, the Hand of Fatma. In many Algerian and Tunisian towns that we have visited, the French and Arab quarters are less sharp in contrast than they are here.

We noticed that the women were veiled in coloured handkerchiefs, without even a slit for the eyes ; the children, as usual, gay and light-hearted ; the men grave and statuesque when walking, but rather absurd when sitting very far back on their donkeys, their feet nearly touching the ground.

We had passing glimpses of small shops, the usual little dens, and here and there a couple of men at their eternal game of draughts. Towards the end of the town was the silent mosque, with

its white dome, and then, in sharp contrast, comes the French quarter, which gives one the sensation of awakening from a dream—the French town which calls its shopping centre “Bijouville.” **Bijouville** . . . and the men of Tyre! that is a long flight down the track of the centuries.

Next day it was sunny and pleasant; we skimmed along by the side of large lakes, bordered by bold hills, and presently the scenery changed, and we were driving through smiling uplands and green valleys. We had a picnic half-way, among flocks of nice black goats, whose musical bells were tinkling different notes as they wandered about, browsing among the brushwood. Then we came to wooded country, and were fascinated by a golden patch upon a mountain side, which had the appearance of a great harvest-field among all the fresh spring green. When we neared it, we saw it was yellow sand, almost orange in the sunshine—thick sand in dunes, with the ripples of the wind on it.

And now we were driving along the ancient road near the sea, which was originally a Phœnician road, an inscription on one of the Roman

milestones giving the information that the old road was restored by Vespasian in the year A.D. 87. The roads of Roman days, as we all know, constitute one of their triumphs, and all roads in this colony lead eventually to Carthage.

Archæologists have learned much from the Roman milestones, which they come across in many unexpected places, the accurate information not only telling them who constructed the road in question, whether it was the work of the Roman soldiers of the 3rd Legion (whose headquarters we have seen at Lambessa), or whether it was that of the natives of the neighbourhood, under Roman supervision, but the inscription also gives the name of the overseer of the work, and many other details.

Thus the milestones, which are still being unearthed in most unexpected places, confirm a great deal of knowledge on the subject of the Roman occupation which was mere conjecture in the past. The discovery of a milestone at once points to a buried Roman road in the near vicinity. Some are found across wild gorges, at heights apparently impossible. L. came upon a paved Roman road, now used as a cart-track, near Taorirt, when he was high up in the Kabyle

mountains. On the borders of the desert, too, these roads are found, apparently leading to nowhere, and every day fresh proofs of the intended permanence of Roman rule in Africa is being brought to light, traces of long-buried farms, villages and towns being re-discovered by a chance milestone.

After we had gone through Tabarka, a bright little seaport, with a pretty island opposite, rising out of the blue of the Mediterranean, we turned away from the sea, and came once more into the Khroumirie country, with its forest hills, richly wooded.

Here we put up at Ain Draham, at a little hotel in the village which was run by one indefatigable woman, with an invalid Arab behind the scenes. She marketed, she cooked, she laid tables, and she served the guests—no small triumph, for the first evening we were there she had to attend on sixteen people, some of the French officials coming to the inn for their dinner. “Ahmed” looked after the bedrooms, but was very sorry for himself next day, and went to bed with a feverish attack, when our unflinching heroine tackled the situation, and ran the whole show in a masterly way.

## SHOOTING AT DAR FATMA

By L.

On Tuesday, February 17, Jules Durand and I left the hotel at Ain Draham, and the wonderful lady who heroically looks after it practically single-handed, to shoot wild boar in the forest, about five miles away—if, that is, we could light upon any.

The road thereto was in a very bad condition indeed, and I know not if any other car than a Ford would have survived the experience ; but, notwithstanding the terrible treatment to which it had to submit, we finally reached the house of the forest guard at Dar Fatma, Mr. Ray, and his charming wife, who most hospitably put us up. They had one delightful child.

Mr. Ray was most kind, and at once collected together a number of his forest men and neighbouring natives, and we started out for a part of the forest about four miles away, where, it was said, was the best chance of seeing pig.

The road was most picturesque, winding round the side of the mountain range, through the forest of trees that spread their branches

in every direction. A constant panorama of far green distances unfolded itself before our eyes.

The forest stretches over many miles and is full of splendid cork trees, which would be of immense value if they could be carted away and put on the market ; but there are, it seems, few or no roads that can be used for the purpose, so transport is almost impossible ; and, owing to the war, France is now, unfortunately, in such an impoverished condition that it is doubtful if any forest roads will be made for a long time to come.

One of the great difficulties in connection with the forests, both in Algeria and Tunisia, is dealing with the forest fires, which are sometimes caused by accident and sometimes by incendiaryism.

Having arrived at our destination, we were posted at suitable intervals from each other, while a native went off with dogs to try to round up the game ; but though both this day and the next we waited patiently, and though at one time, at all events, there did seem distinct signs that pig was on foot and approaching our way, no animal appeared.

We changed our positions from time to time, trying fresh ground, but without success. At one moment it was rumoured that a pig had crossed over from one side of a glade in which we stood to the other, but, like many other rumours, it lacked confirmation.

Pleasant intervals on both days were those when we stopped for our luncheon among the picturesque surroundings of the forest. The air was delightful, the days were soft and genial ; it was good to be alive, no matter whether we slew any unfortunate animal or not.

There is something to be said for the preference that some have for photographing wild animals to shooting them ; the disappointments must certainly be fewer and the animals have a better time.

While we were standing in a grassy glade towards eventide a number of Arab women passed by, carrying on their backs huge bundles of faggots. Women work immensely hard in this country.

With very many thanks to our kind host and hostess, we returned to Ain Draham on Thursday, February 19.

(Continued.)

Meanwhile, when L. went off into the forest of Khroumirie, A. and I stayed at Ain Draham. The quaint hotel had an outside staircase, but such a crazy staircase never was seen, and we had to go up and down it every time we went in and out of our rooms. It was guarded by a white dog, which was chained up at the bottom of it, but was ready to leap upon anybody who ventured near the staircase. An excellent guardian, doubtless, but he very nearly "got" us several times, and we tried to placate him with soft words, but without much success, "Amshee!" (get out of the way) in a voice of thunder having much more effect. That was danger number one.

Danger number two was the staircase itself, which was literally in the last stage of dilapidation. The steps were broken and the under support had entirely given way, and was hanging down, leaving the whole concern almost in the air, and we had the consoling knowledge that if it really collapsed, the mouth of the dog was waiting for us.

We left Ain Draham after three days, L.

having come back from Dar Fatma, which was the name of the forester's lodge, for even in the depths of a forest you cannot get away from the name "Fatma," any more than from the name of "Ahmed."

Down through the cork trees we drove at nine o'clock in the morning, waiting at the frontier—Babouche—only a moment or two, and then stopping at La Calle, where we met L., who had gone off early to arrange about a shoot on one of the lakes near, while A. and I went on to Bône.

#### LA CALLE

BY L.

At La Calle I met two charming sportsmen who invited me to go with them in pursuit of wild boar and duck.

In pursuit of wild boar we motored to a considerable distance from La Calle, and then entered a picturesque wood which was said to be a great haunt of that noble animal, the pig.

We were stationed at intervals down a grassy

ride, while one of our hosts set off to range the wood with the dogs.

The dogs were good, and kept in training by constant exercise, as the owners were devoted to sport, and were continually in pursuit of the wily wild boar, the elusive partridge, or other animal.

Silent and motionless we stood in expectation and hope. At last a joyous cry rang out, and the chase grew nearer and nearer, and then bore away to our right. We followed, and then stood still again, as the cry of the dogs drew close to us. The crack of a rifle suddenly rang out, and a wild boar had appeared and had fallen dead to the rifle of a sportsman who had stood not far from me.

This was the only animal that we got that day.

We had a pleasant luncheon under the shade of a fine tree near the road.

Another day we resorted to a delightful lake not far from the town of La Calle, to seek for wild-fowl. We walked to the lake over a grassy tract intersected by little tributary streamlets, and entering a boat, set out on our quest. Numerous clusters of sedge grass grew

above the surface of the lake, refuges for duck, teal, and other wild-fowl.

We rowed slowly along the lake and managed to secure a few wild-fowl, and in the evening I set out again to see if any more were to be secured.

The beauty of the scene that evening was wonderful. The lights and shadows, as darkness came on, transformed the lake to fairyland. The sky assumed most glorious colours, seen through the sedges which formed a lace-work across it in the gathering darkness. The stillness was intense, only broken occasionally by the cry of a wild-fowl or the rattle of a frog. Every now and then, as the light grew dimmer, a speck would be seen in the distance, and a duck would come nearer and nearer till it swooped down on to the lake.

I managed to secure what I was told was somewhat of a prize, a Colbert, a species of duck of brilliant plumage.

At last the light became too faint for further shooting, so we left the lake in charge of the wild-fowl, and wended our way homewards.

There was a rumour that the water of the lake is going to be drained off, and the land

reclaimed for use. This may be ultilitarian, but from a sporting and artistic point of view, if such a project were carried out, it will be sad indeed.

*(Continued.)*

From Bône we went over to Hippo, St. Augustine's city, and we had an afternoon of sketching from the spot where he wrote his "Confessions" and the "City of God" overlooking the blue mountains of the distant Khroumirie.

Once again we had to reconstruct mentally an imposing Roman city dominating the heights. Below us were the very substantial ancient cisterns which used to supply it with water, and which are still used to supply Bône. The city ran across the plain beneath as far as the sea-shore, spreading widely, with villas and farms in the suburbs, for Hippo Regius rivalled Carthage, during the third and fourth centuries, in magnificence as a town and in power as a centre of commerce.

St. Augustine lived at Hippo as priest, and afterwards as bishop, for a period of forty years—the most tragic years of North African

history, the coming of the Vandals. The Empire from end to end was shaken by the news, in A.D. 410, of the sack of Rome by Alaric the Goth. The whole world was in upheaval and passing through a period of change, and the remainder of Roman history is chaos.

Boniface, the Roman Governor in North Africa, was an arch-traitor, and invited Genseric, the King of the Vandals in Spain, to invade North Africa, and in the year 429 they came, gathering under their standard the Donatists, the Moors, and the Berbers, in addition to their own powerful hosts. In the first excitement of their arrival, flushed with success, they reduced town after town to ashes, bearing away with them anything of value. By May 431, two years after their landing, there were only three of the large cities of North Africa left standing—Carthage, Constantine, and Hippo ; all the others were ruined. St. Augustine had been failing in health for some time, and the mental and physical strain, continuing daily through the time of siege, exhausted his frail body, and he died in 431 A.D.

He would have been proud had he known that Hippo was never taken by force of arms,

for it was weakly abandoned to the Vandals by the Emperor Valentinian III (on the understanding that Carthage was to remain intact), and it was sacked and ruined a year or two after St. Augustine died.

Walking back to Bône, we were talking of Hippo and her tragic end, and agreed that, in spite of all her former importance, her existence now is scarcely remembered except as having been the place where St. Augustine lived and died—the memory of one good man surviving the memory of a great city—which fact suggests a sermon !

Our next move was to Philippeville, and again L. went on ahead, this time to the Kabyle mountains. Philippeville is modern, built by the French in 1837, a quaint town planted on two sides of a narrow valley, with a view of the sea and islands beyond. The main street runs down the valley, and the houses on either side look at each other across the side streets, which are generally flights of steps.

When the French were laying the foundations of this brand-new seaport town they discovered

yet another “Buried City,” the city of Rusicade, of which the theatre remains as a picturesque ruin, embowered in roses and convolvulus, not yet in flower. Excavations have brought to light a great many interesting treasures, and the museum here is said to be the best in Algeria.

Next day we had chequered experiences. Leaving the sea-coast, we went inland, and soon found ourselves among richly-wooded hills. The French are now carefully looking after the trees and planting them systematically, for in countries with a poor water supply the preservation of the forests is very important.

Bruce, the African traveller, in the year 1760, describes forests in Algeria which have long since disappeared, and Desfontaine, the botanist, in 1784, while touring in Tunisia, mentions a great stretch of forest country, where now there is nothing but a wide plain, bare of a single tree. The natives still burn the trees occasionally, and a cork forest near Bône was destroyed in this way forty or fifty years ago.

We came out of the highlands into the valleys, which were in all the freshness of their spring green, but the motor was now beginning to give trouble, and we got out two or three

times and walked on, but were soon picked up again.

A time came, however, when, although we had walked on two kilometres, there seemed to be no sign of the Ford following us, and then we both began to wonder seriously what we could do if the worst came to the worst, and the motor stuck. For the nearest town was forty-eight kilometres away, and we were in a region where not a French house was to be seen, an entirely Arab population living in *gourbis* (tiny huts of a dreary brown colour), the most primitive dwellings imaginable, and fenced in with cactus hedges. The hill-sides are often covered with these "villages," the *gourbis* being built of wattles and brushwood, and thatched with rough grass. Forty-eight kilometres from anywhere, a sulky motor, an almost empty biscuit tin, and nothing but *gourbis*.

The whole story of our hopes and fears and disappointments would be tedious, but is it not an established fact that a motor sometimes shows temper and requires to be humoured? So eventually it went on in a spasmodic fashion, grunting and grumbling, but promising us

nothing, and then stopping again. There was a place at which Jules had told us there was an inn, called El Milia, if only we could get there before it was dark, for now the rain was coming on ; and so the hours passed, till at about four o'clock, tired and very hungry, we arrived at El Milia. It was impossible to stay there, however, as there was only accommodation for one, and the nearest town ahead was Djidjelli on the sea-coast, forty or fifty kilometres further on.

However, we trusted to the good sense of the motor not to play us false, and after tea in a dark pothouse at El Milia (where two men, in rather grim surroundings, were playing *vingt-et-un*), we once more started forth again, and the motor played up to our expectations, and left all its bad temper behind, but it was nearly dark when we made our triumphal entry into Djidjelli. Here we stayed for the night.

All the mist and rain had cleared away by next morning, and the colouring throughout the day was a dream of loveliness. We got away at about ten o'clock and drove along the African Corniche, by the shores of the

Mediterranean, and the beauty of the scenery can only be suggested by one word—superb.

The spurs of the mountains run into the sea, the road being cut, for the greater part of the way, through sheer rock ; sometimes it is tunnelled, and the motor runs through, to come out upon even more heavenly glimpses of blue and sunshine, up-hill and down-hill, round all the capes, headlands, bays, and inlets, each corner showing a fresh view of perfect beauty. It is a magnificent bit of coast scenery on the grandest scale : bridges are thrown across the gorges ; we passed great stalactite caves where brigands used to dwell ; and the colour of the rocks, the richness of the vegetation, together with the spring green, made it a drive to be remembered.

At the village of Mansouriah we stopped for luncheon, and afterwards sat for an hour or more by the sea-shore, enjoying the beauty and sketching a little ; and the afternoon drive was, perhaps, more beautiful still, if this were possible, because of the greater glow in the light, and we forgave the motor for being troublesome, because it only meant that we got out and walked ; but a moment came when we were

thirty-two miles from Bougie when she stuck fast. "The Arab at Djidjelli gave me bad petrol, and she won't go on it," said Stephens.

Providentially we were near a farm called the Ferme Nicholas, a little bit off the coast road, and A. made friends with a French woman who lived there, and, wonder of wonders ! there was a telephone. After the wildness of our drive it was a miracle to break down within reach of such a thing. There was nothing for it but to telephone to Bougie to send out a relief motor immediately to the Ferme Nicholas. But just after the message went, we heard the Ford coming gaily up the road. "The bad stuff that was in her," explained Stephens, "I poured off, and there's a little good at the bottom that didn't mix with it, and that'll carry us on for a mile or two."

So in we got, and we managed fourteen kilometres, and then she stuck fast on the worst bit of the whole road, where there had been a landslip. However, before many minutes had passed, the relief motor arrived, driven by an Arab, the Ford was filled up with petrol, and we arrived safely at Bougie half an hour later.

## ACCOUNT OF SHOOTING AT TAORIRT

By L.

I left Bône with Jules Durand for Bougie in pouring rain. I stopped to see the museum just outside Bône. There are magnificent mosaics *in situ*: one representing a feast is of great interest. It displays a four-pronged fork being used at a banquet. In connection with forks, the evolution of the number of prongs may be borne in mind. The Chinese fork consists of a single prong; then came the two-pronged fork, later on the three-pronged fork, and now it has advanced to four prongs, to which stage the Romans had seemingly arrived.

The mosaics are evidently on the site of what must have been a very fine house in Roman times.

We then went on to the picturesque town of Philippeville, where we had luncheon, after which we went on to El Milia, where we stopped for the night.

The next day we started for Bougie. The haze was dense and prevented a proper view of the scenery, which is magnificent; indeed it may be said that the Corniche Road, as it is called between Djidjelli and Bougie, is quite equal to,

if not finer, than the Corniche Road on the Riviera.

Near Mansouriah I stopped to see a splendid cavern which contains extremely fine stalactites and stalagmites. It is said to have been discovered when the road was being made, since the French occupation of the country, and it is stated that it was found to have been used by smugglers. Sooner or later I should imagine that electric light will be installed, as it is at present difficult to see the marvels of the cave properly.

I then went on to Bougie, and from there to a forest inn at Taorirt. Here I stayed for two nights, in hopes of wild boar.

The inn was placed most picturesquely in a clearing surrounded by a forest, and was kept by an old French lady who gave every indication of having been beautiful in her youth ; she had most stately manners, and her appearance reminded me of a very great French lady who has lately passed away. She had to help her a Kabyle woman, who was covered with Kabyle coral and silver ornaments, and the lady provided us with remarkably good meals cooked by herself.

The forest was said to be alive with wild

boar, and Jules having persuaded a forest guard to bring some dogs to search therefor, we started out the next morning in high hopes. Descending the hill on which the inn is placed, we reached a path which ran round the hill at a considerable elevation ; far down below we could see the lower stretches of the ever-dense forest.

The forest guard commenced to beat the forest, and at last a joyful cry was heard, and Jules and I were in great expectation as the cry grew nearer and nearer. Would the wild boar break to the right or to the left ? Had he crossed the path unseen to us ?

Now I heard a shot, evidently from Jules' gun, and when I came up to where Jules was, I found that, though no wild boar had fallen, Jules had shot a porcupine, which he afterwards brought home in triumph. This constituted our complete bag, for, though we tried again and again, we failed to obtain any other animal.

I tried going to some distance and watching at two places, where I thought it possible that pig might appear when it was getting dark, but there was no result to reward the attempts.

Failing in our sporting efforts, we turned to

antiquarian pursuits, and walked over to where we heard that there were Roman remains, some three miles away. The way led us over picturesque grassy uplands intermixed with bushes till, in the distance, we saw the remains of Roman buildings, built, as always, of large blocks of stone calculated to last for ever. The buildings were scanty, very probably of a small Roman fort. By the ruins ran a cart-track, which was quite possibly a highway in Roman times.

*(Continued.)*

On the following day we motored over the Kabyle mountains, and called for L. at Taorirt. We went fifty kilometres further on to a pretty little village called Azazga.

The fine weather had brought the tourists, and the inn was nearly full, but we managed to squeeze in for the night.

Next morning we skimmed over the Kabyle country which had so delighted us nearly two months ago, and we recognised several of the characteristic red upstanding rocks as old friends, and once more delighted in the little red Kabyle villages, for there is a special charm in going for a second time over a beautiful

road, especially when coming from the opposite direction.

But all too quickly we were leaving Kabylia, and we were stopped by the sight of two storks, a happy pair, who had built their nests on the peak of a *gourbi* by the roadside. They were earnestly conversing together—taking no notice of the motor, or of the world in general—a perfect subject for a snapshot. Storks are never shot in any other way, and so they trust man—and we were charmed by the trustfulness of this couple.

The French prune the ash trees very severely, because it induces a great growth of young shoots which the horses and cattle will eat when hay is scarce ; and on one melancholy tree, which had been hacked into the shape of the letter Y, a stork adorned each pinnacle.

As L. was photographing the happy pair a delightful family party of Kabyles came on the road from a cottage near ; one man, about five women, and a lot of children, all dressed and jewelled gaily, and tattooed in various designs ; one had her hands smartly tattooed like lace mittens.

Their clothes were of the greatest interest to us. Of course we had often and often passed



LAST SCENE OF THE TOUR—A KABYLE GROUP



them on the road, and taken in the general effect of splashes of colour and a great deal of jewellery, but now we saw how they draped themselves in detail, and how the bright hand-kerchief was crossed round the back of the head and tied with a knot in front, and below the knot a round silver plaque of Kabyle work, with coloured stones inset, and pendant drops hanging down from it. The beauty of the party wore a specially pretty one, and L. suggested to her lord and master that he would like to buy it. So a note had first to be placed in the hand of the man, and examined closely, and then the jewel was removed from the forehead of the beauty. The man grasped the note, and the beauty, to our surprise, snatched it from him, and there was great laughter.

We all felt that this was the last scene in our delightful tour, and the storks were the audience, and never moved while all the talk and laughter were going on, and in saying good-bye to this group of Kabyles we felt we were saying good-bye to their wild mountains and all the many places of beauty and extraordinary interest that lay behind them ; and once more we arrived back at Algiers.

## CHAPTER XIII

### “GOOD-BYE TO ALGIERS”

“Algiers, white city of fair Afric’s sea,  
Set in its majesty upon the steep  
That overlooks the bay’s translucent deep,  
White as a swan in perfect purity.”—(LEIGH.)

*March 5, 1920*

“**A**LGIERS the beautiful”—but our tour is over.

On a winter’s evening in December we saw her first from the decks of the *Duc d’Aumale*, with all her lamps alight, and looking almost like an illuminated scene in a fairy play. Even the trams, lit up from within, bore some resemblance to fairy coaches, running up and down the steep hills in the town, the water reflecting all the glitter and brilliance in shafts of quivering light.

Next morning the daylight impression was of the shining whiteness of her houses and buildings, and of her great extent beyond the

town. Built on a hill, which has been compared to a gigantic amphitheatre, her heights above the sea are covered with villas, tier above tier, with their surrounding trees and gardens, each having an uninterrupted view of the Mediterranean. One could never tire of this view, for the effects are ever changing ; the bay can be pearly white or opalescent, gold or copper in the sunrise or the sunset, turquoise, or even an angry grey, with a fringe of waves accentuating its perfect curve.

I think we may allow that we find the history of the town of Algiers in ancient times a little out of focus, but she comes all too sharply into the field of vision during the days of the Algerian pirates.

Early in the sixteenth century, in order to free themselves from the yoke of Spain, which threatened to crush them, the Algerians implored the aid of the Turks, their co-religionists, to come to their rescue. From them Algiers received her present name, *El Djzair*, *i. e.* The Islands.

Turkey came, when implored to do so, but she remained as a conqueror, and the fate of Algeria fell into the hands of the two wild

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corsairs, the Barbarossa brothers. Under the Turkish regime, for many succeeding years, every kind of violence was tolerated, and the ships of all nations were seized with their crews, the latter being treated with the utmost barbarity, sold in Algiers as slaves, or forced to do slave-labour in the public works, their housing and feeding alike unspeakable. Twenty thousand Christian slaves were employed on work in connection with the harbour.

In Algiers one is always coming in touch with some reference to these lawless times, the Italians being the greatest sufferers, but in the porch of the English church there are inscriptions on the mural tablets giving the names of many British subjects who were also captured, memorials to our fellow-countrymen who underwent the horror and degradation of slavery.

In course of time Algerian piracy was checked, but not absolutely stopped until the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Three hundred years and ten the Arabs were under the domination of Turkish tyranny, and, although ninety years have now passed since France ousted Turkey, a number of Ottoman

buildings still remain in the western portion of the town.

The great Turkish fortress, the Kasbah frowns grimly over the city that it once commanded, and portions of an encircling wall, eight feet thick, are still to be seen. Behind that wall lived the Dey, and we have visited his palace and his mosque. Poor man—his life was always in danger, and few of the rulers appear to have died a natural death, notwithstanding the eight-foot wall! The prison, which at one time held two thousand Christian slaves, was within the Kasbah too; also the Courts of Justice and other Government offices.

And now comes the final scene of Turkish rule. On April 30, 1827, the last of the Regents, Hussein Dey, was seated in a pavilion on a balcony in his palace which looked down upon an inner court. He was fanning himself lazily, and probably was greatly bored. He had only been out of the Kasbah twice during his reign of fifteen years, and the transaction of public affairs must have been an irksome task.

The Dey of Algiers was weary of interviews, and he knew that this morning there was some

troublesome business to adjust with the French Consul. The weather was steamy and enervating, hence his fan. In comes Monsieur Deval, the Consul, who made it very clear to the Dey that Algeria had incurred, through two Jews, a debt to France of 7,000,000 francs, and that the moment had come for it to be repaid.

The French Consul was firm, and would accept no compromise, and the Dey, probably resenting firmness on a sweltering morning, in a passion struck him with his fan.

This insult was too much for France. To have her representative struck in public was an offence which could not be passed over, and by July 4, 1830, the French had entered Algiers. The formidable Turkish guns were silenced, and presently cast into the melting-pot, to arise from it in the form of a spirited equestrian statue of the Duc d'Orleans, which stands in the centre of the Place du Gouvernement to-day, while the palace in the Kasbah, black with tragedies and treacheries, is pointed out to visitors by the playful name of "The Palace of the Fan."

• • • • •  
Algiers has the general appearance of an

up-to-date flourishing town, the French buildings overpowering Turkish and Arab alike. Even the mosques give the impression of being dwarfed and crowded out. The sea front is a series of massive square blocks, arcaded, like any important city of France, and beneath the arches, offices, restaurants and shops.

It is always amusing driving along this sea front and looking out for different types in the passers-by: the Arabs of position, who have, perhaps, arrived from distant towns; majestic Moors, with heavily braided *burnouses* of fine cloth; then all the different uniforms, with the Zouaves and the Spahis adding colour, and I was surprised to see several veiled Arab ladies, gracefully enveloped in soft white draperies, driving past; and many were tripping along the footpath, showing pretty ankles, and wearing the smartest French high-heeled shoes and silk stockings.

We noticed a good many Kabyles, and some Mozabites parading along, and many Jews, who have a special quarter of their own.

It is the clear atmosphere, and the brightness of the town, and the whiteness of the buildings, the spacious harbour and the bay beyond it,

as well as the ever-changing kaleidoscope of humanity, which makes Algiers so attractive. A mile from the town is the Jardin d'Essai, a garden started by the French as early as 1832. It is laid out in avenues, one of which is planted with African and Japanese palms alternately. At one point we felt as if we were in the midst of a primeval forest, surrounded by a jungle of bamboos and india-rubber trees. One of the latter was measured, and the circumference of its trunk was over nineteen feet, and its height sixty feet, which speaks well for North African soil. Of course the object of the garden is experimental planting, in order to find out what is most worth cultivating, so that to experts the interest is immense, and its contents priceless, every kind of Oriental vegetation growing luxuriantly under perfect irrigation and other conditions.

North African soil contains many elements that are capable of great things (witness the "Garden of Allah" at Biskra), but there are enormous difficulties in combating the fierce forces of African climate—the sand, which has a tendency to encroach with every sandstorm, and the lack of water during several months,

these are continual problems ; whereas in the winter the torrential rains, tearing down the soil from the mountains, and scoring deep channels in the plains, form another difficulty.

The French to-day are learning from the Romans of yesterday, who had all the same problems to face, and they are proud to feel that, as a race, they are, to a great extent, their descendants—heirs of all the ages.

• • • •

In striking contrast to modern Algiers is the dreamy old Arab town existing behind it, built up the face of the hill, with roughly-paved streets, steep, narrow, winding and mysterious, such windows as there are being small, more like slits, and unevenly placed ; but we were told that many of the interiors are well worth seeing, built round central fountain courts.

We visited one of the houses, now the Bibliothèque, once one of the palaces of the Dey. Its central court enchanted us with its beauty, pillars from Carthage, diagonally fluted, upholding an upper balcony decorated with charming old tiles of rose and blue alternately.

In the centre was a marble fountain, water-plants growing in the basin, and arum lilies on

the edge. All round were Moorish arches, both above in the gallery and beneath round the courtyard, supported by the marble pillars, ivory-white with age, the Turkish crescent being carefully superimposed on each capital.

From the corners of the Moorish arcades great palms soar upwards, stretching towards the sky, and the effect of the light from above, shining through the leaves and on the fountain beneath, was fascinating. The mysterious shadows under the arches, the atmosphere of days long passed away, together with the intense stillness, gave the crowning touch of charm. Once more, classic pillars, Moorish arches and coloured tiles all harmonising perfectly.

Yesterday on the high-road, as the sun was going down, we saw an Arab who had climbed up on to a narrow stone coping above a culvert which ran under the road. His hands were raised above his head, and he was looking towards Mecca. His staff and coloured shoes were by the roadside beneath him. Looking back, we saw his tall figure silhouetted in the clear atmosphere against the glow of the setting sun, and then bending forward and

stooping, he touched the stone wall with his forehead—his evening prayer.

It was an impressive and farewell glimpse of Arab life, for this evening we say good-bye to North Africa, with her Arabs and Moors, Mozabites, Kabyles, Jews and Turks, and we are carrying away so many fresh impressions that we wonder which will remain most vividly in our memory.

Perhaps the desert, with its wide spaces and indefinable colour, the mysterious beauty of its sunsets and afterglow—or its animals? The Arab horses gaily caparisoned, the black donkeys and the flocks of long-haired goats, or the sheep watering at the wells. Or, more likely, the grand old beast the camel, who, though he has served man patiently through countless centuries, has never lost his expression of fine disdain.

Or—bringing back impressions of Bible pictures—shall we have visions of the desert people, with their black tents, their swinging walk, their long staves, and their families in various picturesque groups? Or else a phantasmagoria of various races that meet in the sunny squares of the big towns, bright blots

of colour among the white *burnouses* of the Arabs? Or a general impression of the busy market-squares, the lading of groaning camels for their long journeys, chaffering and buying and selling?

Or the veiled Arab ladies in all their variety of costume and station, down to the poorest women, who are literally beasts of burden, carrying terrible loads on their poor bent backs (while their lord and master rides behind on his donkey), and whose youth has vanished before they are twenty-five.

Or will brightly-clothed, gay little children come dancing into our thoughts, with flashing eyes, and flashing teeth, and flashing ornaments, and every shade of complexion from black upwards?

Even the names of the places will feel dream-like presently; but we shall think of the mountains, some stern and barren, with grand, wild outlines, and others wooded to their very summits, with here and there plantations of fig trees, looking, in their wintry bareness, like ghosts, mere blurs of smoke against the evergreens.

We shall not forget a sunrise over the

Djurđura snow-capped mountains, or the gorges, so deep that the sun can scarcely penetrate, as though the mountains had been cleft by a giant sword and were left gaping.

Often, and especially during our homeward tour, we had longed to break through the shell of the last seventeen centuries until we caught, in its reality, a magic glimpse of this great Roman colony of North Africa, before any shadow of coming disaster had robbed it of its splendour. From what remains, it is certain that the cities were built to last through the centuries. Temples, capitol, forum, and theatre, solid and secure, pointing to the great richness of the colony in classic times, with a population infinitely larger than that of to-day.

. . . . .

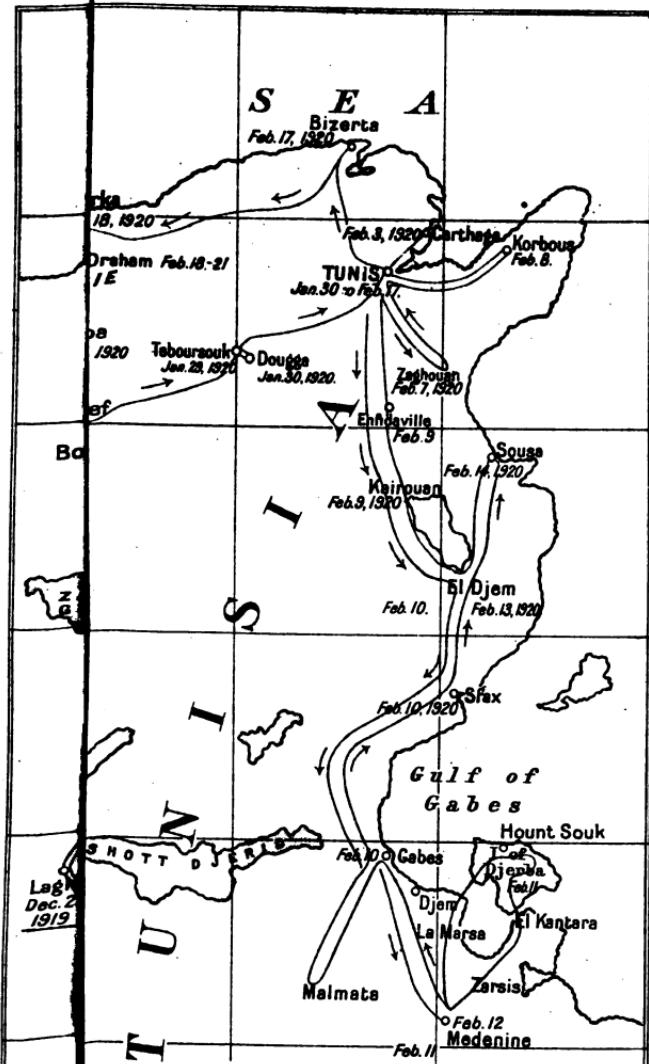
The French have found a land of promise in colonising Algeria and Tunisia, and before them is ever the example of their Roman predecessors as an inspiration and a warning ; and we, the travellers, have found a land of fascination—more than a mere holiday-land of beauty ; and as we sail away, waving our good-byes to the coast of North Africa, we

feel happy in the thought that we are bringing back with us such a treasury of sunny memories.

#### ENVOI

“ Farewell, poetic and romantic land !  
If never more beneath thy Eastern skies  
We see, amidst the waving palms, arise  
Dream-cities circled round with golden sand—  
As if some magic wand had placed them there,  
And they must vanish when we venture near—  
Still, tho’ on distant shores, we love thee well,  
And in these pages we attempt to tell  
The secret of the charm that weaves the spell.”

(AGNES LEIGH.)



## OUR TOUR IN NORTH AFRICA

Scale:—Each Square represents 100 kilometres.

(E.G.W.)



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